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Church Principles

CHURCH PRINCIPLES

BY

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Prefatory Note

THIS small volume makes, of course, no pretence to be an adequate discussion of the doctrine of the Church and its institutions. It is little more than notes on the subject; and, indeed, it was in the form of notes that it originated. During the last three years the writer has been one of a committee of six Anglicans and six Free Churchmen who have met regularly at Lambeth Palace to explore fundamental questions relating to reunion. In view of these meetings, it was useful and needful for him at times to focus his ideas—either on paper for discussion by the committee or merely in his own mind—on various aspects of the Church. This book—except for the last chapter, which is somewhat different from the others—contains some of these ideas or principles written out more fully. But it retains the character of notes rather than that of a treatise, as the occasionally too rapid

transitions from one topic to another (and, indeed, the pace all through) clearly show. The book will best serve its purpose by not pretending to be more than it is.

The writer (who is a Presbyterian) ventures to believe that little or nothing in these chapters will be found to be what is called—to use an objectionable but sometimes unavoidable word—“denominational.” Their standpoint—in so far as they have one—may be expressed in two general postulates which have no connection with sectarian interests or ecclesiastical party. One is that the Church is essentially *living*. Therefore it cannot be treated in the way in which one can discuss some external object, the structure of which may be measured and the forces of which may be calculated with scientific exactness. The other is that the Church is primarily *Christian*. Therefore a doctrine of it, or of anything in it, is true in principle—for those who like the word, one may say is “high”—to the degree that there are discernible in that doctrine the spirit and presence and act of the Church’s Creator and Master. A writer on this subject, then, must not go too far

with ecclesiastical definition, and he cannot too often go back to Christ. A book on the Church should be content to be incompletely logical, for life is larger than logic; and, for there is nothing in the Church's principles which does not take its character from its Source, it should seek to be always religious.

P. C. S.

CAMBRIDGE,
October, 1923.

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Chapter I

The Creative Fact

THE first impression which an observer has of the Christian Church is that it is a great form of human association—the greatest, indeed, which has appeared in history. Whatever else it may be found to be, certainly it is this. Therefore we naturally conceive of it as constituted on the same principle as that which is the basis of all other forms of human association—the principle that man's life is essentially corporate and that he cannot truly live it solitarily. Especially do we easily think in this way of the Church and the State as complementary expressions of man's social nature, the one in respect of his spiritual and religious and the other in respect of his secular and political life.

This conception of the formative principle of the Church is, of course, true so far as it goes, and it does not call for any special elucidation. Obviously religious life is social, as all human life is ; and,

obviously, the Church is the society of Christians. Many true and needful things can be said on this, and occasion for saying some of them will arise as we go on. But if, in treating of "Church principles," we mean to begin at the beginning, then we must have something deeper as our starting-point—something deeper and more divine. The creative and constitutive principles of the being and life of the Church is not the social nature of man. It is not anything merely about man. It is something about Jesus Christ. Man, with his social instincts, could form a Christian club. But the Church is not just a club. It has been created and is constituted on an entirely different basis, and this we must discover in Christ Himself.

To say "in Christ Himself" is to say something other than and deeper than what is called the institution of Christ. The Church is often based on some word recorded in Scripture—some word or act of the Apostles or of the Lord. But even this is not its basal fact. This would give the idea of the Church its authority; but the idea of the Church has more than authority. It has necessity. By neces-

sity I mean that it is based not merely on something which even Christ may have said and which conceivably He might not have said, but on something which He was and is and which He cannot but be. The creative and constitutive basis of the Church must, then, be sought in something further back than any word or act of institution. It is not enough that we begin with the topic of Jesus as "the Founder." The Church is more than founded by Christ. The Church is a part of the fact of Christ.

We must examine this, and do so carefully, for it sounds—and indeed, is—mystical. But unless we recognize this element in the creation and life of the Church, we are not in sight of the conception of the Church which is in the New Testament. The first mention of the Church in an apostolic writing known to us speaks of it as, not merely that which has been instituted by Christ, but that which is "in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ."¹ The apostolic figure of "the Body of Christ"—which is more than the society of Christians—is familiar.

¹ 1 Thess. i. 1.

Phrases and figures such as these may be termed "mystical," but they are not, on that account, to be disregarded as meaningless. They mean at least this—that the constitutive idea of the Church is not in man or in the mere association of men even at Christ's injunction, but is, somehow, in Himself, and that its being and life are to be expressed, in the first instance, in terms of His being and life. This is what we must try to state more clearly.

What then, let us ask, is that in Christ which is the creative and constitutive principle of the being and life of the Church? I answer this question as plainly as possible.

The clue-thought is this. Christ is not merely an individual man—even the greatest, even the Divine. His is a uniquely inclusive Personality, and His life is carried on into the lives of a great multitude, each of whom says, with the Apostle, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." This may be "mystical"; but, surely, it is this mystery which is the very axiom of the Christian's life. It is also the axiom of the Church's life. For thus the personal union of the Christian man

with Christ is also a union with the whole body of the redeemed. My relationship with Him involves this relationship with them. I may not realize this or value it; I may even deny it. But it is none the less true, for it is not possible to be alone in union with Christ. Indeed it is not possible to separate Christ and the company of His people. Christ and Christians are, in a phrase of Thomas Aquinas, *quasi una persona mystica*; or, as an old Scots Presbyterian Catechism puts it, "Christ is not another Person from His people properly." St. Paul expresses it even more emphatically when he says, "Ye are all one man"—it might be rendered "one humanity"—"in Christ Jesus." It is this solidarity between Christ and His people which is the creative and constitutive, the originating and essential principle in the being and life of the Church. It is only when we grasp this that the Church becomes for us not merely an object of historical observation, the beginnings of which can be traced to the institution of Apostles or even of the Lord, but an object of faith, so that we place it in the Creed among the great verities of

Christian experience and say, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints."

I have said we must state this carefully, and this means we must be careful not to overstate. This *unio mystica* is primary and essential; but there is a danger of pressing it too far and without due qualifications. When, for example, Dr. R. C. Moberly insists that "what Christ is, the Church, which is Christ's mystical body, must also be,"¹ a little reflection will, I think, show that this is too absolute a statement. Certain *distinguos* at once present themselves to the mind. Christ is the Creator of this common life: the Church is not the Creator, but is (as a line in a popular hymn says) "His new creation." Christ is the Redeemer: the Church is not the Redeemer, but is the company of the redeemed. Christ is both Priest and Sacrifice: the Church is a nation of priests, but it is not the Sacrifice. To say unqualifiedly as Dr. Moberly does—and I quote him because his words on this point are repeated frequently by other writers, especially by Anglicans—

¹ *Ministerial Priesthood*, p. 251.

that "what Christ is, the Church, which is Christ's mystical body, must also be" is, thus, an insufficiently guarded statement. It presses too far the metaphor of "the body," forgetting that this is but one of the apostolic figures for the relationship between Christ and His Church—there are others not so absolute in their identification—and forgetting, further, that metaphors are metaphors and should not be treated as if they were *data*. The idea of solidarity, which I have used, is safer, and it is sufficient. Solidarity is not identity. We cannot say and we do not need to say that what Christ is, that the Church is. We can and we do say that Christ and the Church are one organism, and that all Christians, being organically related to Christ, are organically related to one another. This solidarity is the basal fact of the being and life of the Church.

We now are, or should be, able to discern and state clearly what the Church is in its creative and constitutive principles, prior to any expression of this in outward historical form. It is far more and other than a human association, though it is

congruous with the corporate character of human life. It is more even than an apostolic or divine institution, though the Lord and His Apostles ordained and directed its historical emergence. It is, in its essence, a spiritual fact about Christ Himself—the fact, namely, that, uniting men in vital relationship with Himself, He unites them in fellowship with one another in Him. This, and this only, is the Church which is not merely descended from Christ or the Apostles, but is “*in* God the Father and *in* the Lord Jesus Christ.” This is the Church which is really a part of what Jesus Christ was and is. This is the Church which, therefore, rightly is named in the Creed among the spiritual facts of the faith. Its outward form of expression we shall come to presently; but not only deeper than any outward expression in history but also prior to it, in the region of faith, are this union and this communion in Christ, and here is to be found the creative and constitutive principle of the being and life of the Church.

This, then, is what the Church is essentially and primarily, and before it is anything else. The Church becomes, as we shall

see, a school of doctrine, an ordered polity, and so on. But before it is anything of this kind, before it takes on outward and historical forms, it is this union and communion in Christ. If we would describe this by one term, the best word is that which is the earliest name given to that which later was called the Church—the word “fellowship.” The first consciousness of the company who composed the Church at its beginning was a consciousness of fellowship. This was a twofold bond. It had a divine side and a human side. On its divine side, it was a fellowship with Christ: on its human side it was a fellowship with those who are united to Him. It was this double fellowship which was the Church at its first consciousness of its life. It is this double fellowship which is the essential life of the Church still.

This, then, is the constitutive principle and first definition of the Church—the principle and definition by which it is distinguished from all other forms of association. Let us see, before passing on from this primary aspect of our subject, how sure and central this conception is; and, also, how it is catholic and the inspiration of the spirit

of charity to all that name the name of Christ.

The view of the Church as created in and constituted by the union of Christ and His people and of His people with each other in Him places the whole idea of the Church on the basis of sure spiritual fact. An institutional view of the Church's origin hardly does this, or, at least, does not do it without serious challenge. That Christ ever spoke the alleged words of institution at Cæsarea Philippi is not admitted by all critics; while, more generally, many students of Apocalyptic contend that His view of the future, with its expectation of an imminent *parousia*, leaves no room or time for the conception and institution of the Church. It is impossible to enter into any discussion of these critical questions at present. I think a well-grounded answer can be made out against the position that Christ neither spoke of the Church nor even contemplated it. But the point for us is that, in the view which has been presented in the foregoing paragraphs, our faith in the Church as an essential and genuine part of original Christianity, while, of course, it is interes-

ted in these critical arguments, does not wholly depend on them. Whether or not Christ said certain words at Cæsarea Philippi or whatever anticipations He and those of His time held of the coming *parousia*, the spiritual facts of the union of the Christian with Him and of the union of all Christians with one another in Him remain spiritual facts—they remain part of the fact of Christ—whatever criticism may challenge about His utterances or expectations. In other words, the reality of the connection of the Church with Christ is as real and as sure as anything can be in religious history and in experience. Whether Christ instituted the Church by saying to St. Peter, “On this rock I will build My Church” is not the essential matter. What is essential is the spiritual fact that “in Christ” is the fellowship of the Christian with Him and of Christians with one another, and this is the basal fact of the Church. This is not a matter of critical opinion; it is spiritual verity if anything is. It is part of an experience and knowledge of Christ Himself and what He is. Thus do we “believe in the Holy Catholic Church”

as a fact of faith. And, thus believing in it, we make our thought of the Church not only sure but also central. There are persons to whom the whole idea of the Church is not merely secondary and negligible, but almost to be deprecated as merely "ecclesiastical." As a reaction against many features in the outward organization and operation of the Church, this may be intelligible. But to belittle the idea of the Church itself is to forget that it is a part of Christ. It is not ecclesiastical: it is essentially Christological. If the Church be the fellowship "in Christ Jesus," it is as religiously central as it is experientially sure.

It is, further, this conception of the Church which has the true and the original catholicity. The word "catholic" is, perhaps, the most misused in the religious vocabulary, and is often employed as no better than a party badge. This word—like every word and every thing in our religion—must constantly be carried back to Christ and have its use tested by Him. The truest use of the term in its first use, when Ignatius, in the earliest extant passage employing it, said, "Where Jesus

Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.”¹ The developments and even the divisions of ecclesiastical history have not made that fine saying obsolete; nor should later meanings of the word make us forget that this is its primary meaning. The catholic fact about the Church still is Christ, and the fellowship which is “in Him.” Catholicity is just another name for the largeness and comprehensiveness of His inclusive Personality as He lives in His people. And we should remember when we use the word—this beautiful word—that we must use it only in a spirit which is *consistent* with the Spirit of Christ, and on a scale and with a charity which are *commensurate* with Him.

All this leads to a practical thought with which I may close this introductory chapter. What has been said of the constitutive principle of the Church should be also a dominant principle in our intercourse with all Christians. In other words, when we meet anyone with whom we differ on various and, it may be, serious points connected with Church life and order, but whom we cannot but recognize

¹ *Ad Smyrn.*, 8: ὅπου ἂν ᾖ ἰ. Χ., ἐκεῖ ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία.

to be verily in this fellowship by which the Christian is united to Christ and, in Christ, to all others who are similarly united to Him, let us remember that we *are* so related to one another. It was said of Sir Walter Scott that he seemed to treat everyone whom he met as if he were a friend and even a blood-relative. We are indeed blood-relatives "in Christ." Let the Protestant and the Catholic, the Episcopalian and the Presbyterian; the Conformist and the Nonconformist so think of each other. This is the spirit in which to meet all Christian people, and it is the spirit in which to discuss all Church principles and problems—not least those which are most controversial. We have now to pass on to consider the outward expression of this spiritual fellowship of which we have been speaking; and it is here that differences of view will inevitably emerge. These differences need not be sinful, for they may arise out of honest divergence of human judgment; still, they are differences, and they easily lead to division and even bitterness. As we deal with these things, let us continually keep in our minds the thought of this

deeper oneness "in Christ." Pascal says that a man should have *une pensée de derrière*¹ in all his judgments, even when he is discussing things as people in general do. We are going on to discuss, just as people and books in general do on this subject, the questions arising out of the visible form and order of the Church. Let us do so with this *pensée de derrière* in our minds all the time—that behind all these things and the differences which may arise out of them, the fact remains that union with the Lord is union with all who are His people, and that, whatever be said about the visible edifice, this fact always is the creative and constitutive principle of the Church of Christ.

¹ *Pensées*, xxiv. 97.

Chapter II

The Visible Body

IF the Church existed only in a super-terrestrial and purely spiritual sphere, then what has been said of the vital relationship of Christ to all His people and of their relationship with one another in Him would be practically all that needs to be said on the subject. The *unio mystica* would be the one and the sufficient Church principle. And it is the one and sufficient principle of the being and life of the *entire* Church—that entire Church which comprises all the redeemed in all the ages, which extends to heaven as well as earth, which is described by the writer of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* in such general and ideal terms as “the City of the Living God” or “the General Assembly and Church of the First-born.” Of this company—incommensurable in words, and seen and known fully only by God—the one and only principle of being and life

is the community of all its members "in Christ."

But of this Church which thus transcends our powers alike of definition and of vision a part exists under conditions which are not super-terrestrial and purely spiritual. This is the part of the Church which is, at any given time, on earth. Being on earth, it lives and must live under the conditions characteristic of all human life on earth. Human life on earth is or may be "spiritual"; but it is never only spiritual. It is spirit expressed in or with a body, and a body is material, outward, visible. No other kind of life than that which is associated with a body is possible or, indeed, conceivable for man in this world—for even the most spiritual man. A being living on earth without a body is not a spiritual man, but is a ghost. And this, which is true of personal life, is even more emphatically true of associated life, which, indeed, we call by the term "corporate." It is and it cannot be otherwise with the life of those associated in the fellowship by which Christians are united to Christ, and, in Him, to one another in this world. That certainly is

spiritual; but on earth it must have bodily expression too. Thus does the Church on earth become what is called the "Visible Church."

We must use this term with care. It had often been egregiously misused. Two things must be guarded against in its use.

First, we must not allow ourselves to slip into thinking that the Church—the part of the Church which is on earth—becoming thus visible means, in any way, its coming into being. The outward things by which the Church becomes visible are in no sense *creative* of the being and life of the Church or any part of it: they are only *expressive* in the forms suitable to this world, of a being and life already existing in virtue of what we have seen to be the one principle of the Church's creation. Thus, that part of the Church which is visible on earth in no wise differs from that part invisible in heaven, or from the Church in its entirety; in respect of its constitutive principle; it differs only in its manifestation. To create life is one thing; to give life visibility is another. Outward form and order and

institution can do the latter : only the *unio mystica* of Christ and His people does the former. Body manifests soul, and, in this world, is indispensable for the manifestation of soul ; but it cannot make soul. When we discuss anything of the visible Church, we must always guard ourselves against ecclesiastical materialism.

The second thing we must beware of when we speak of the visible Church is that it does not mean there are on earth two Churches—one invisible and one visible. It would be well if we could give up speaking of “ the visible Church ” and speak rather of “ the visibility of the Church ”—of the one and only Church—on earth. There cannot be two Churches anywhere, for there is but one Christ Who constitutes any Church. This is patent and should be axiomatic. But the matter is not quite so easily dismissed as this. The idea of two Churches on earth is clearly impossible. But the distinction between *ecclesia invisibilis* and *ecclesia visibilis* is the statement—not, perhaps, in the most accurate or the best-guarded phraseology—of a patent and difficult fact about the Church

on earth, and this must be frankly recognized and fairly considered.

We have seen that the constitutive principle of the being and life of the Church—on earth as anywhere else—is the spiritual union of Christ and His people; and we have also seen that the Church on earth must give expression to this in visible form. Now, the patent and difficult fact emerges that *this spiritual reality and its visible expression are not co-extensive*. Sometimes the union with Christ is profound without due regard to any forms of ecclesiastical expression; sometimes the visible form is immaculate but the spiritual life which it is presumed to express is notoriously lacking. It is this want of exact correspondence between the inward reality and the outward manifestation which causes confusion and perplexity in the discussion of the subject of the visible Church on earth. It is not difficult to perceive how this discrepancy arises. It arises because any outward feature of the Church—any rite or polity or other external form—can be and, as a matter of fact, continually has been unwarrantably and falsely assumed. The

visible can always be, in Augustine's word, "feigned," by either deliberate hypocrisy or mere unconscious want of reality. Thus arises the discrepancy which has led to the use of the terms "invisible" and "visible" Church. The phraseology arose at the Reformation—the first to employ it was, I think, the Swiss reformer Zwingli—but the fact which it describes is no invention of Protestant divines. Nowhere is this distinction more uncompromisingly made than in Augustine. Every reader of that great father knows how he sets forth and indeed oscillates between two conceptions of the Church. There is the institutional idea—the *communio externa*—which is visible by means of its outward features and particularly by the mark of baptism. But, alongside of this, there is the spiritual or mystical Church—the *communio sanctorum*. This is not identical with the other; for it both excludes many who are within the visible body and includes many who are outside of it. Ultimately, this mystical Church is identified, in the Augustinian doctrine, with the whole company of those who are predestinated by God unto salvation—a

company certainly not discernible to human vision. Augustine, who is a powerful rather than a consistent writer, gives no reconciliation of these differing and conflicting conceptions of the Church, and presents no unity which harmonizes them. Whether, then, we adopt the Reformation phraseology about a "visible" and an "invisible" Church or not—and I have said it is not the best or safest phraseology—the fact that the cognizable body and the real Church are not identical presents a difficulty and a problem.

Not having—as Augustine had not—any unifying reconciliation of these two conceptions, the one inward and the other outward, most people settle practically the question of what and where is the Church on earth by making either the one or the other determinative. Which of the two they prefer for this end depends, probably, on their religious and ecclesiastical training and temperament. A mind of what is described as the "evangelical" tendency instinctively treats the inward saving union with Christ through faith as the capital thing in any view of the Church; and, consequently, is inclined to give the in-

stitutional a subordinate and, in many cases, an inconsiderable place. The defect of this method is that, inasmuch as this saving union through faith is not a matter of human observation, we are not much helped in finding out where the Church on earth is. On the other hand, a mind which may be described as of the "catholic" type—I am for the moment using both of these terms in their poorer and party and not in their nobler and true sense—inevitably regards the institutional as determinative, and delimitates the Church on earth by such clearly visible frontiers as the Roman obedience or the episcopal order or the rite of baptism. This method, so admirable in its logic and its lucidity, has the fatal defect of being inadequate to the religious facts, and, when tested by spiritual reality in experience or in history, is found to be not strictly true.

What, then, shall we say is the right attitude to take towards this problem of the visible Church on earth? I reply that it must be answered as every problem of truth—not excluding ecclesiastical truth—must be, and that is in the scientific

spirit. Now, a first rule in all sound and scientific thinking is that we must never force our conclusions to be more precise than our *data* warrant. Theological thinking greatly needs to learn this rule, not merely in connection with the topic of the Church but in connection with many of its topics. A real fault in much of our theology is that it has not known where to stop; but "the power of halting at the right point is one of the rarest powers even of clear-sighted and truthful minds."¹ We must remember this in connection with the question before us. We should and must accept the fact that, while we have plain ground and reason to say that the Church on earth must be a visible body, and have adequate material in history to say that it has been and is visible, we simply have not the *data* which enable us to draw its outline with perfect precision and so locate it with absolute accuracy. We may wish we had. It would simplify and settle a host of ecclesiastical issues, and, incidentally, would make the writing of the present chapter a shorter and almost

¹ Principal Rainy in *Delivery and Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 373.

a superfluous task. But in all matters of fact, the question is not what we should like to have, but what we do have, or, to put it religiously, what God has been pleased to give us. And on this question God has not given us exact lines. That it is so is nothing exceptional. On many of the most vital matters of religion we have, while adequate, not absolutely exact *data*. Take the Bible. There is a real and reliable record of revelation; but there are places where the text is not authentic and, possibly, even whole books may be of disputable canonical authority. Take the even more vital example of the earthly life of Christ. It has historical reality which is proof against all negative criticism—if for no other reason, because, in the *mot juste* of Rousseau's, *ce n'est pas ainsi qu'on invente*, and, indeed, in the whole range of literature, there is nothing less like the invention of man than the personality of Jesus; but there are details in the story which it is impossible for any candid-minded student to deny are open to critical uncertainty. If, then, we are not given exact lines about the Bible, it is not wonderful that we do not have them regarding

the Church ; if we do find them in respect of Christ's life in the flesh, we should not expect to find them in respect of His life *in membris Suis*, which is the Church. This way of reasoning is unacceptable to the Biblical literalist and to the ecclesiastical legalist. But the foolishness of God is always better than the wisdom of literalists and even of lawyers. We have not got the exact *data* they demand. Yet all the time, there is an authentic revelation to read, a real Christ to know, and a true Church to see.

The conclusion, then, that we come to is twofold. First, the Church on earth is and must be a visible body, with, therefore, its outward form which we should observe and maintain. But, secondly, we must acknowledge that its visibility is not definable with complete precision, and, therefore, we should not press the contour of its outline rigidly. An illustration may be permitted here, even although, as I had occasion earlier to say, metaphors are not *data*. There is the visibility of a house and there is the visibility of a cloud. A house has distinct walls and we can say of anyone that he is either outside or in.

A cloud is quite clearly seen, but the observer cannot draw in the sky a definite line and say where exactly the cloud begins and where it ends. The visibility of the Church is rather that of a cloud than that of a house. I repeat that I know that any such view is unwelcome to the ecclesiastical mind; Cardinal Bellarmine declared the frontiers of the visible Church are as clear as those of the Kingdom of France. But our *data* do not warrant us in being so precise. And the *data* settle it.

It may seem that one should here deal with what are called the "notes" of the visible Church. The subject, however, is a somewhat artificial one. We can know where the Church is only as we know what it is, not by this or that arbitrarily selected and interpreted mark. The Roman controversialist whom I have just named, Bellarmine, reduced—or one should rather say expanded—the subject to absurdity when he discovered no fewer than fifteen marks of the true Church, culminating with "the unhappy end of its adversaries" and "the temporal felicity it enjoys." The four traditional "notes" taken from

the Constantinopolitan creed—"unity," "sanctity," "catholicity," "apostolicity"—have been interpreted in various ways, so that a discussion of them tends to be an argument about terms rather than an agreement about facts. The marks generally accepted in the Reformed Churches—including Anglicanism—are the Word of God faithfully preached and the Sacraments administered, with ecclesiastical discipline added; but, here again, what is faithful preaching or due administration is open to variety of opinion. We need not enter now into the examination of these or any other lists of "notes."¹ As I have said, the subject is artificial. You cannot identify the Church of Christ after the manner of the details enumerated in a passport.

But a very practical question arises here which is entitled to an intelligible answer from anyone taking the position indicated above, that the outline of the visible Church cannot be precisely discovered and that

¹ Perhaps the best and most authentic material is found in Acts ii. 42. I once heard the Master of Selwyn College (Cambridge) aptly describe the points named in this verse as "the Jerusalem Quadrilateral."

any so-called "notes" are ambiguous and uncertain. We find in Christendom to-day Churches or what seem to be Churches or claim to be Churches. The question therefore presents itself of how far and on what principle we should recognize these or they should recognize one another as parts of the one true Church of Christ. This difficulty is increased when we observe that, whatever "notes"—or, to use a simpler word, features—we associate with the visible Church, these are found in varying degrees within different Christian bodies. I take two extreme instances. The Avignon Papacy possessed unchallenged unity: no one who has read Petrarch's letters will say that it conspicuously manifested sanctity. The modern Society of Friends preserves a notably pure fellowship: it has not preserved the Sacraments, which nearly all other Christians are agreed have been handed down from Christ and His Apostles. Thus we sometimes must put one feature against another and consider the absence of this with the presence of that. Those who remember their *Apologia pro Vita sua* know how Newman, when on his "death-bed" as

regards his membership with the Church of England, tossed about between Romanism and its impressive catholicity and Anglicanism which, at least, "had the Note of Life."¹ We observe similar variety of "notes" when we are looking not, as Newman was, for the one and only Church to join it, but at different sections—or what seem to be so—of Christendom and ask which are to be recognized as parts of the universal Church. This is a practical question in many places to-day. It should not be met either with a rigid ecclesiasticism or with a vague undenominationalism. It is entitled to an answer more Christian than the former and more principled than the latter. I suggest that the line of answer may best be reached by our looking, in the first place, to see if there is any precedent in the New Testament narrative bearing on the matter, and thereafter—for it is always safer to begin with history—see if any guiding principles emerge.

As regards the New Testament narrative, the relevant passage is that in the *Book of Acts*² describing the Apostolic

¹ *Apologia*, ch. iv., § 1.

² Acts xi. 19-26.

“recognition” of the *ecclesia* at Antioch. As a guarantee that I cite this with a scholar’s accuracy and impartiality, I shall summarize the account given of it by Dr. Hort, using, as far as possible, his words. Fugitives from the persecution which began with the martyrdom of Stephen preached the word all along the Syrian coast up to Antioch; and, in that great capital, a multitude of disciples gathered “in the most casual and unpremeditated way.” “No Apostle had led or founded a mission; no Apostle had taught there.” “But there the Christian congregation was.” What the relations would be between this body and “the original body of Christians” was a question of interest not to be answered off-hand. The original *ecclesia* sent Barnabas to Antioch to investigate. “He came and recognized what St. Luke calls ‘the grace that was of God.’” Later, Paul also came. And we read of Paul and Barnabas joining the company “*in the ecclesia*”—the italics are Dr. Hort’s—“thereby recognizing,” he adds, “the disciples at Antioch as forming an *ecclesia*—a significant fact as regards both the recognition

of this irregularly founded community at Antioch and the change in the use of the term *ecclesia* itself.”¹ (The latter point does not concern us at present.)

The guiding principle here is unmistakable to any mind approaching the narration simply to read the facts and not seeking support for some preconceived theory of order. The crucial thing that made recognition right and incontestable was the presence and work of the saving grace of God. It was not that this body answered to any formal “note” of the Church. It certainly was not anything of apostolic authority, for this *ecclesia* was in existence before the Apostles ever heard of it and was reported to the mother Church in Jerusalem as a body in being. It was and was solely because Christ, clothed in His gospel, was so manifestly there that recognition followed.

Now, this case is taken from a period when the Christian Church was in the process of making rather than from that of settled constitutional order, and conclusions from it are not to be indiscriminately applied in the circumstances of to-day.

¹ Hort's *The Christian Ecclesia*, pp. 59-61.

Still, it is just what *makes* a Church, as distinguished from what furnishes it and organizes it, which we need to know in this matter of recognition. And what made a Church in Antioch and made it recognizable there makes a Church to-day, and makes it recognizable still. We must, therefore, maintain that recognition should fasten, primarily, on this which was then and is still the constitutive thing about a Church, and only secondarily and subordinately at those external things which express its ecclesiastical order. This is by no means to say that neglect or defect in these things of outward order is to be treated lightly. Such neglect or defect is an injury done to the structure of the Catholic society; and it may well be a loss—none the less real though, perhaps, unconscious—to the particular society in which it is found. Every section of the Church of Christ has a duty in respect of the ordinances which “order” the inter-relationship of the parts of the whole Body and regulate its fellowship—a duty in which I take leave to say some bodies of the Protestant and Evangelical type in Christendom seriously fail. But the

question of recognition is prior to all this. Not to recognize is to “unchurch,” and that we must not and dare not do when we see what was seen at Antioch. I go further and say that to unchurch on the ground of some neglect or defect in ecclesiastical order a body in which Christ manifestly dwells and works is not other than the very act of schism. It is that no whit the less when done, as it often is done, in the name of Catholicity. It is schism because it severs a bond in Christ otherwise but incomplete and impaired in its outward expression. We must not and dare not do that—even to those who do it to us. I go further still. Where we find a Church in which the presence and power of Him Who constitutes the Church are unmistakable, but which is, as we think, defective in things which have been ordained for the expression of the community of fellowship in Him, then we should, as Christians and Catholics, make the more and make the most of such expressions of this fellowship as remain. The Churchman—to put it practically—must not only not unchurch even the Quaker, but also should, since they

cannot meet at the Holy Communion, the oftener pray with him.

It will be said by some that this is to give up all "Church principle." To say that is to confuse Church principle with mere legal rule. I admit that what has been indicated is not a clear-cut ecclesiastical formula which will instantly decide all cases; but I have already maintained that, much as ecclesiastical legalists would like it, God does not give us these hard-and-fast lines. Church principles are not made of red-tape; they are living sinews made of the vital relationships between Christ and His people.¹ What has been indicated above, then, far from giving up Church principle, really goes back to what is supreme Church principle, which is the appeal to Christ Himself as He speaks and acts through His Spirit. I am most conscious that any such appeal must be made with reverence and care, for we

¹ Newman, with all his spiritual genius, is at times a typical example of the desire for ecclesiastical legalism. Speaking of the difficulty of deciding whether or not a man should be given the Sacrament, he says, "I do not know this man's heart: perhaps he has come religiously; but *rules* would dispense with the necessity of thus doubting" (*Letters and Correspondence*, II. 180).

may too readily claim the countenance of the Holy Spirit for our own views. Still, if we believe in the living Lord of the Church at all, this danger must not inhibit us from seeking to discern where He is and what He does among the Churches. Therefore, in this matter of recognition, it is both a real and a religious question to ask concerning any Church or seeming Church which claims to be a part of the Body of Christ, whether indeed He recognizes it by dwelling there and by carrying on there the saving and sanctifying work of His Spirit in the Church. Of course, if such a question is to receive a sure answer, it must be fairly put. I do not think it is a fair question to press on one in the case of every small or sudden emergence of what appears to be spiritual life. One is quite entitled in such cases to answer with no more than "Wait and see." I object to be hustled into recognition of any Church or so-called Church. But there are great historical bodies, the relation to which of the presence and power of Christ has been tested for centuries, and there the question may perfectly fairly be pressed—not that the mere lapse

of time in itself proves anything, but because thus the spiritual *data* may be more adequately and more surely observed. If in such cases the candid and Christian mind can give but one answer, that answer must govern the whole issue just as it did at Antioch. This is a question where the Head of the Church is sole arbiter. We must own what He owns; we dare not unchurch where He manifestly abides, lest that should be not only to excommunicate those whom He does not, but even to excommunicate Him.

Having said this, one should, perhaps, add—though I am reluctant to introduce what is of ecclesiastical argument rather than religious principle—something about the way out of it or round it which has been devised by the ingenuity of those who, on the one hand, cannot deny the spiritual facts, but who, on the other, are bound to a theory of the Church which is narrower than that which these facts seem to involve. I refer to the curious doctrine that, while the spiritual life indisputably manifested in various bodies plainly betokens a Divine presence and blessing, it is no proof of these bodies being

“within the covenant” of the Church, but is to be regarded as showing only that God’s grace “overflows” its due and authorized boundaries and reaches beyond the Church in “extraordinary and uncovenanted mercies.” This is the language which Newman applied to the spiritual life he saw in Anglicanism, and which, in turn, some Anglican writers (whom I shall refrain from naming) apply to “non-episcopal bodies.” There is no need for any of us—whether non-Romans or non-episcopalians—to resent being thus relegated to God’s “uncovenanted mercies”; this is language less presumptuous towards us than towards Him, the promises of Whose Gospel it so arbitrarily and artificially differentiates. It is enough to say that the whole idea has no basis in the New Testament. Where are God’s mercies “covenanted”? They are covenanted in Christ and in the redemption which is in Him: “this,” He said, “is the New Covenant in My Blood.” Where, then, Christ is—Christ *vestitus Evangelio* and in His saving and sanctifying grace and power—there is the only covenant which the Gospel knows. And where

spiritual fruit and life are, that same Christ is ; for, again, He said " Without Me, ye can do nothing." Where saving and sanctifying life is, Christ is ; and where Christ is, the covenant—that is, the promise and the sureness—must be found also. This idea of a bi-partite Christ—one part of Whom manifestly saves and sanctifies, the other part both does this and is guaranteed to do it—is impossible Christologically, as well as religiously and historically. Christ, wherever He is found, is always His own guarantee. The whole idea I speak of would never occur to anyone except under the stress of a preconceived ecclesiastical theory which is a bed of Procrustes that does not fit the facts. And indeed it is not maintained in the end by fair minds. It may be that Rome—which is better at teaching things than learning them—still speaks of Anglicanism as Newman did ; but the latest and most authoritative utterance of Anglicanism regarding non-episcopal " bodies " has no suggestion that they are " outside the covenant," but recognizes their ministries as not merely " blessed and owned by the Holy Spirit," but are " real ministries of

Christ's word and Sacrament *in the Universal Church.*"¹ I trust we have heard the last, in England at least, of this poor improvisation of uncovenanted mercies as applied to any place where Christ is or to anything which Christ does.

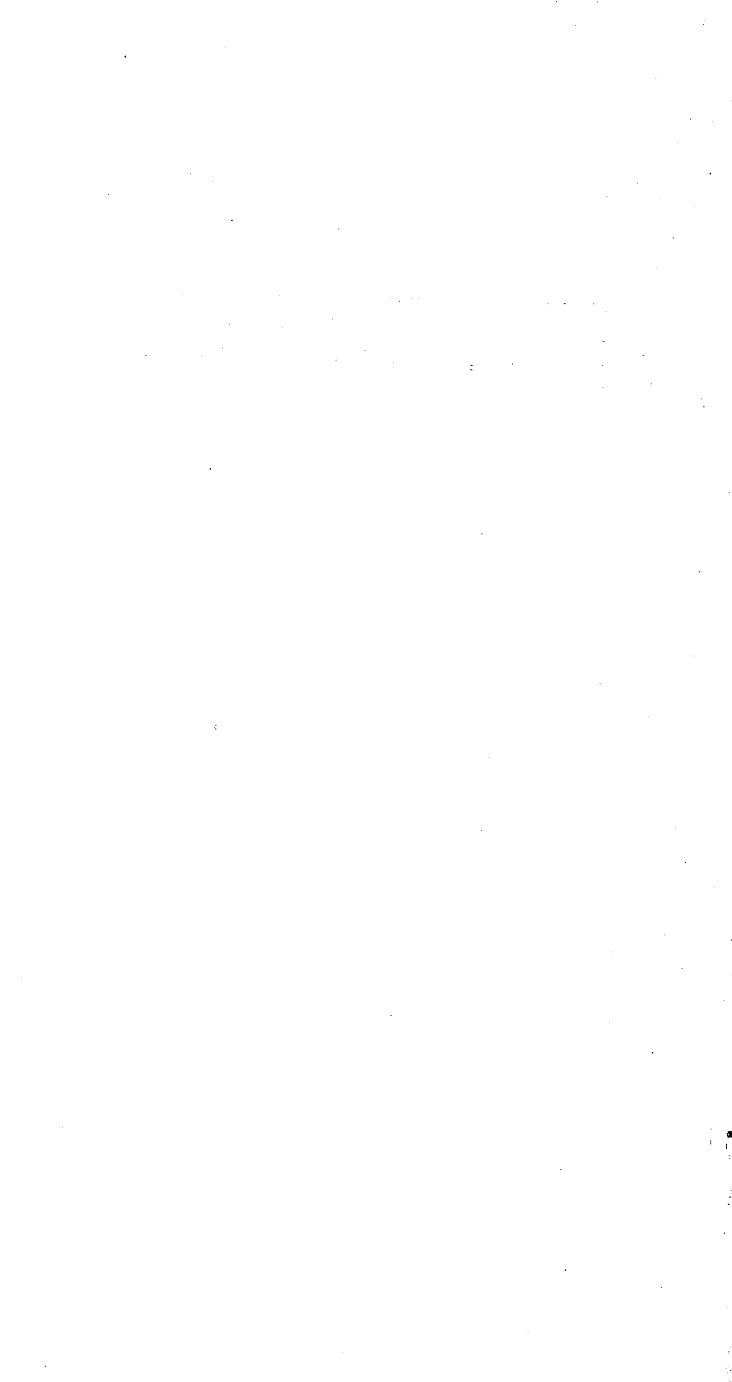
I close this chapter by saying that what I have been speaking about is recognition, and the principle which should govern that. Further considerations may most properly arise when the question is not one merely of recognition but of practical co-operation or corporate union. Here a Church may, in certain circumstances, feel called in the providence of history to be trustee for some principle—perhaps something less than a principle—of faith or order, which, therefore, it is not justified in giving up or imperilling or even compromising by indiscriminate association with Churches and bodies which disregard its importance. In England, at present, for example, Anglicanism may feel thus

¹ From a memorandum of the Archbishop of York, the Bishops of Gloucester, Ripon, Salisbury, Truro, and Winchester, adopted by the Joint Committee on the Lambeth Appeal of Representatives of the Church of England and the Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches of England (1923).

about episcopacy ; or the Free Churches may feel it about spiritual liberty. There is a danger here in magnifying points into principles or in holding too tenaciously to what are sometimes called “ distinctive principles.” Still, this trusteeship is, in the present divided and variously developed condition of Christendom, a position intelligible, and, at times, important. It concerns, however, as I have said, the further question of co-operation or union ; and it is not immediately concerned with the prior question of the principle on which recognition is right and unchurching is wrong. That principle remains in the apostolic precedent in Antioch, and it is reasserted in the words of the great Antiochan father that “ where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.”

Chapter III

People and Ministry



THE union of Christ and His people and of His people with one another in Him is not *a* but is *the* constitutive principle of the Church—the only one ; and the Church thus created, is, in its nature, all of a piece. As there is no differentiation in its constitution, there can be none in its essential character. But differentiation does appear later, not in what the Church is, but in what it does or has. Here, in particular, appears the differentiation between the *coetus fidelium* as a whole and what we call the clergy or, more properly, the ministry. This is not a distinction in the character of the constitution of the Church itself. The Church is not constituted on two principles of which the second is “orders” ; it is constituted solely on the creative principle of the *unio mystica*, and that in all and every part of it. But within that one constitutive principle of its being and life, this differen-

tiation emerges ; and so much that is controversial and divisive has emerged with it or out of it, that we must look at the relation between the Church and the Ministry with some care.

The guiding principle here is that the Church is the primary conception and is comprehensive. This means that all Church powers or functions are committed in the first instance to the whole body of believing people, and not to a section or order within it. Against this position, it is maintained by those who take a different view of the relation between the Church and the Ministry that certain essential powers and functions were given by Christ to the Apostles alone. A little examination will show that this is not tenable. There are two crucial instances. One is the conferring of authority regarding the remitting or retaining of sins ; the other is authorization for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. In the former case, the commission "Receive ye the Holy Ghost ; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them" was spoken to a company which St. Luke explicitly tells us comprised not the Apostles alone but also

“them that were with them.”¹ The conclusion is drawn by Bishop Westcott that “the commission must be regarded properly as the commission of the Christian society and not as that of the Christian ministry.”² The other case—that of the institution of the Lord’s Supper—is not less clear, though on another ground. Here unquestionably only the Apostles—whether the Twelve or, without the traitor, eleven is immaterial for the moment—were present. To them alone was said “Do this.” It is therefore maintained that they alone—or a ministry deriving from them—may celebrate the Sacrament. But observe what is involved in this. There are arguments—as everyone who remembers his Euclid is aware—which prove themselves to be unsound because they prove too much. If it be true, as it is true, that to the Apostles only was said “Do this,” it is equally true that to them only—to identically the same persons—was said “Take, eat.” Thus, if only the Apostles were authorized to celebrate, only the Apostles were autho-

¹ St. Luke xxiv. 33. Cf. St. John xx. 19-23.

² Westcott’s *Gospel of St. John*, p. 291.

rized to communicate. This is, as Euclid would say, absurd. No one denies that in the matter of communicating, that company represented the Church and received the Bread and Wine for the whole body of believers. But you cannot make the Apostles represent the Church in the moment that Christ said to them "Take," and not represent it equally in the moment when He said to them "Do." The conclusion of Dr. Hort is irresistible that "the Twelve sat that evening as representatives of the Ecclesia at large."¹ We thus find that an examination of these crucial instances upholds and indeed necessitates the guiding principle that the Church is the primary and comprehensive conception, for whatever powers and functions essential to the Church were given to the Apostles were either given also to members of the Church who were not Apostles, or else were given to the Apostles as representing the whole membership.

The far-reaching idea which followed from this is the essential and unalienable priesthood of the whole Church of Christ. That is a dwarfed and mutilated sacerdo-

¹ Hort's *Christian Ecclesia*, p. 30.

talism, dating practically from Cyprian, which thinks of priestliness as the peculiar character of the clerical order. It cannot be said too clearly—it is said here in no controversial spirit, but simply in the name of accuracy—that the New Testament never even suggests priesthood as the prerogative of the ministry, but always associates it (apart from the unique priesthood of Christ) with the whole body. It is thus not without reason that Bishop Lightfoot says that “it might have been better if the later Christian vocabulary had conformed to the silence of the Apostolic writers, so that the possibility of confusion would have been avoided.” To apply the term “the priesthood” habitually or exclusively to the clergy, is something of the same unhappy use of a word as we see in the French use of “*les religieux*” to denote professed monks and nuns. All Christians, and not only or specially monks and nuns, are “*les religieux*.” The whole Church, and not only or specially the clerical section of it, is “the priesthood.” This of course does not mean that the Church may not have and should

¹ *Diss. on the Apostolic Age*, p. 235.

not have its ministry to act as—the phrase is Dr. Moberly's—"ministerial organs of the Church's priesthood." We shall come to that immediately, and I shall exalt it in its due place. The thing to perceive at present is that its place is not primary, nor is it this ministry which is constitutive of the sacerdotal character of the Christian religion in sacrament or absolution or anything else. In a word, it is not ordination which makes the priest: it is redemption. No candid reader of the New Testament can challenge that. "Thou hast redeemed us by Thy blood and made us priests" is the Church's anthem. The Christian priesthood, then, is primarily the Church's, not the ministry's; and the Christian religion, where it has the character which we describe as sacerdotal, has it, not because of its clergy, but because of what Christ said and gave to the whole Christian society.

Now, having asserted this so emphatically—and it can hardly be asserted too emphatically—let us not be led into that reaction against a merely clerical priesthood which has little or no use for the ministry. Our mental danger is always

reaction ; and religion has suffered from it almost more than anything else has. If we look at the matter again, we shall see that the ministry is, first, something which the Church must have ; and, secondly, is something more and higher even than that.

Let us recall what has been said in the foregoing paragraphs of powers and functions committed by Christ to the whole body, and, in particular, of the whole Church as a sacerdotal society. There is here a distinction which it is desirable that we perceive accurately. In important senses, it means that each individual member of the Church shares in spiritual powers and privileges, and, in particular, that he has full and free access to God without the mediation of any except the One Mediator, Christ Jesus. This is never to be lost sight of or obscured. But this does not exhaust the meaning. We must also recognize that, in hardly less important senses, powers and privileges are given to the collective body to be exercised by the body as a whole. Dr. Hort has expressed the point with his usual justness and clearness of statement in com-

menting on the Petrine word translated in our Revised Version of the New Testament "a holy priesthood." He says: "St. Peter doubtless meant by *ἱεράτευμα* not a mere aggregate of individual priests, but a priestly community. Such a priesthood is doubtless shared by each member of the community in due measure, but only in so far as he is virtually an organ of the whole body; and the universality of the function is compatible with variations of mode and degree as to its exercise."¹ Here, then, appears the place of the ministry as "the organ of the whole body" in such functions as are to be exercised not by the individual but by the body collectively. Thus—to take the outstanding example—the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is not given to the Christian individually. It is given to the whole body. It is essentially a social and corporate action. It is the Cup "which *we* bless," the Bread "which *we* break"; and the "we" here is the Christian fellowship observing the sacred rite together. For such action, therefore, the

¹ Hort's 1 *Peter*, p. 126.

body must have some duly authorized and representative organ. The ministry in this duly authorized and representative organ. It in no wise denudes the Church as a whole of powers and functions which have been, as we have seen, committed to the Church as a whole; it only provides for the orderly and authorized exercise of these. And it in no wise interferes with such privileges—even those of a priestly character—which are properly exercised by the individual Christian. But it is an organ suitable and indeed—in some form or other—indispensable for the exercise of powers and functions characteristic of a corporate community to be used by it acting as a whole.

All this is quite simple, but by itself it is quite inadequate to a true and to the truly “high” view of the Christian ministry. It does not take us beyond an obvious expediency or necessity such as may be seen in any human corporate association. Every society needs representative agents or officials. But the Christian ministry is more than this. It is representative of the Church in certain things, but it is representative of more than the Church.

There is than this a far higher thought of the ministry.

The higher thought of the ministry is that it is directly Christ's ministry. "*He* gave some, apostles ; and, some, prophets ; and some, evangelists ; and some, pastors and teachers." The commission of the ministry, then, is more than a delegation to representative function on behalf of the Church. As we have seen, it does speak and act for the Church as a corporate body ; but the Christian minister also speaks and acts directly in the Name of Christ. It is something sent or "given" to the Church—as also to the world—even more than something authorized or commissioned *from* the Church. It is therefore there to please and serve not it, but Him. It is His Word it must faithfully proclaim, even to a Church which is worldly or faithless and which desires its servants to preach peace where there is no peace and to say soft things. And in the end it is responsible not, as a delegation is, to the society which appointed it, but, as a stewardship, to the Master in Whose Name it has spoken and acted. Here is indeed the very meaning, in its

Christian use, of the term "minister." The word means "servant," and the word "servant" implies "master." What or whose is the mastership correlate to this servanthship? It is not, in the true sense or in the last resort, that of the visible Church or any branch or congregation of it. We do not speak accurately when we describe a man as the minister of such and such a congregation or church. He may serve *in* that congregation or church; but he is there the servant *of* Christ. That is the lordship correlate to this servanthship. The Christian minister should always think of his ministry as, in the Apostle's phrase, "the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus." It is, no doubt, an ecclesiastical commission to speak and act in things which belong to the corporate society. But it is more. It is a direct vocation from Christ to speak and act as His minister. "We are ambassadors," said the greatest Christian minister who ever lived, "on behalf of Christ as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ."

How searching a thought this is for the heart and conscience of the individual

minister is not our present topic. This is a book not of personal exhortations but of Church principles. Our Church principles, however, will be all the better, and they will be the more likely to be Christian, if they arise out of what is close to personal religion. And what I now desire to go on to show is that it is this conception of the ministry as, in its deeper reality, a vocation from Christ, and as a commission from the Church only in virtue of this, which is the true way by which to approach the questions about orders and ordination which have proved so controversial and divisive in Christendom. These questions have too often been regarded from the wrong end and in the wrong proportions. By the wrong end is meant that of the ecclesiastical commission instead of that of the divine vocation. By the wrong proportions is meant that the former and its method have been given an importance which belongs to the latter and its reality. Now, truth is both an orderly thing and a proportioned thing. Let us try to look at these controversial questions in their right order and in their due proportions one to the other.

To begin, then, with what is capital and determinative. The capital thing is that a minister is Christ's minister; and the determinative thing is that Christ calls him to be His minister. So distinctly is this capital and determinative and so plainly is it prior to and predominant over anything ecclesiastical, even what is called ordination, that, if this character in a man's ministry be patent, the necessity for anything more to validate his ministry disappears. The classical case of this is St. Paul. He was not one of the original Twelve who had "compained with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us," for whom therefore a special exemption might be claimed¹; yet he was ordained of no Apostle and no Church. But, in his case, so manifest was the direct divine call and so manifold and indisputable the proofs of his ministry that ecclesiastical sanction did not need to be invoked in the question; and this, be it noted, was the case of a man claiming

¹ One may note that the Twelve were not ordained. The word ἐπορεύσεν in St. Mark iii. 14, rendered "ordained" in the A.V., should be rendered, as in the R.V., "appointed."

to be not merely a prophet and preacher or evangelist, but one of the Apostles. We must not pass lightly over this instance as if it were *sui generis* and therefore of no practical or permanent meaning for the Church. On the contrary, it illustrates to the Church for all the ages the principle that the call of Christ alone is what makes the minister. We may not say that this principle is obsolete in the Church. But if a man claims to base his ministry on it alone, repudiating any confirmatory commission from the Church, we may justly require him to show palpable proof of his vocation as St. Paul did, who, when his apostolic position was challenged, replied, "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord?"

This brings us to the next stage, which is the function of the Church in relation to the capital and determinative fact of vocation. If what has just been said be true—and anyone who disputes it must settle the question not with the present writer but with St. Paul—then it is clear that what the Church does in ordination is not to constitute a man a minister and not even to confer the primary and essen-

tial qualification of ministry, but is to recognize a ministry of Christ already in being, to ratify that in the name of the Church, and also to "order" its due and authorized place in the structure of organized Church life. Now, if this be so, we see what is the thing in ordination about which the Church should be most conscientious and on which it should expend its chief care. There are many persons to whom the thing in ordination about which meticulous care must be shown is some detail—some external and even physical detail—in the manner and method of the ritual ceremony. I by no means ignore or despise order in such things, which has its due place and value. But if the main idea in ordination be to recognize and ratify a vocation already received from Christ, then it is manifest that the great thing about which a Church should be most careful is *that the man to be ordained really is a man God has called and chosen*. This is the primary and essential question, and it is—to anyone looking to the religious realities—a thousandfold more vital than any point of ritual. For this reason, I regard Churches

which are specially solicitous in testing vocation as having a really higher doctrine of ordination than Churches which are meticulous about method. It is here, one may observe, that the "call" of a Christian congregation—a right indubitably primitive—is of unique value. If a body of Christian people, after prayer and consultation, declare they have found a man has a message of God for them and they desire him to have the care of their souls, then a bishop or presbytery (or whatever be the ordaining authority) may well be encouraged to believe that man may truly be ordained in God's Name. One of the canons of Hyppolitus describes the case: "Let the bishop be chosen of all the people. . . . Let the people say, 'We choose him.' Then, when silence is restored throughout the congregation, let them all pray for him, saying, 'O God, give strength to him whom Thou hast prepared for us.'"¹ There—the call of the Christian people attesting a true vocation of God—is "material for ordination."

¹ Quoted in Lindsay's *Church and Ministry in the Early Centuries*, p. 246.

The act of ordination, thus religiously conceived, is both a test of truth and a means of grace. A man may sincerely think he is called to the ministry. But even sincerity does not prove it a true call. Even an honest man may mistake his call and mistake himself. And the shallower and more self-conscious the man is, the more likely is he to put undue reliance on his own assurances. It is here that the recognition of this vocation by the Church is appointed and used of God. And thus appointed and used, it is a true means of grace, which the Apostle calls a "gift of God." The term "grace" may be used, in connection with ordination as in connection with much else, in a mechanical and unspiritual way. But let us remember that grace is not some metaphysical or semi-physical influence or essence. It is personal. It is Christ Himself giving or doing something. And when the Church, in some responsible branch of it, is convinced that a man is truly called of God to His ministry and sets him apart for this work with faith and prayer, then Christ does honour His Church's ordinance and indeed gives

strength and grace to His servant. It is a shallow and self-sufficient soul which despises this.

If the first thing be the divine vocation, and the second the Church's recognition of this, then the method of this recognition remains as the third thing. I do not deem it necessary in a book which professes to deal only with "principles" to enter into any discussion of the many questions—historical, ecclesiastical, ceremonial—which arise here. I only observe that all these questions have their place, which is that of order. Now, order is not and it is never to be made the first and essential thing. People who make matters of order first and essential in ordination—or in any other great religious act—are people who have lost sight of the realities, at least temporarily. On the other hand, there are people who do not seem able to show that it has not the *first* place except by treating it as if it had *no* place at all. This reaction may be at times intelligible; it is, nevertheless, an ill-balanced reaction, and leads in the end to confusion and trouble. Surely it is not impossible for intelligent persons and intelligent Churches

to say, alike in principle and in practice, both that the first things are alone and always first, and also that the second things are not nowhere but are second. After all, even secondary things have a right to exist. That is the way in which to view the whole business of order in connection with ordination. That is the way in which the New Testament treats it. Take the great protagonist of liberty—St. Paul himself. He had principles about this very matter which regarded nothing as essential in comparison with the Divine Vocation, as his own claim to possess a valid ministry shows. But, in building up a structure of Church life, he systematically honoured ordination; he respected the principle that those already ordained should confer it; he observed even the form of the “laying on of hands.” These may be secondary things; but it is just secondary things which St. Paul knew will not be done in the Church to “edification”—they will not really build up the Church structure—unless they are done “according to order.” When, then, Churches or individuals are negligent or individualistic

about order in connection with ordination, they do not help to build up the solidity and unity of the Christian Church and they occasion trouble and confusion which might easily have been avoided. The problem of Church unity to-day amply illustrates that. I therefore value order not merely for the sake of orderliness, but for the far higher sake of charity and unity in the Church of Christ. But, while this is to be said—and there are places where it most emphatically needs to be said—it must not be so overstated as to confuse the question of order with the question of essential fact behind all order and method. In ordination—with which we are concerned at this moment—an adequate order in doing it is, for reasons which I have indicated, not only a desirable thing but a duty; still, the really important fact is that the Church, in some responsible section of it, is intending to recognize and ratify and actually is recognizing and ratifying the reality of a man's vocation to be Christ's minister. I would accept that even if the method of it were not all which an order, based on the New Testament and having regard to the solidity and

unity of the whole Church, would rightly require. This raises, in some cases, questions of degree and of detail; into these, however, I cannot be expected to enter here. I have stated what I believe to be the ruling principle.

I trust it will not be deemed a relapse on my part in the end into what is controversial if I close this chapter by saying one thing more, which I desire to say with all respect to those who will not agree with it, as I am aware some will not.

The view of the ministry and of ministerial ordination which has been given—that, namely, which rests upon, first, the personal vocation of Christ, and, secondly, upon the corroborating recognition and consecration of the living Church—appeals to me as both more religiously immediate and more intellectually secure than that other conception, which maintains itself in great areas of Christendom, of an episcopal chain, each link attached to the previous link, stretching away through the ages till it becomes at long last attached to the Apostles. I hope that, in dealing with intelligent and religious minds, it is no

longer necessary to meet with lengthy argument that shallow criticism which describes the former of these views as upholding a ministry which comes "from beneath," while the latter maintains a ministry which comes "from above." Surely, the only real and religious "above" in the whole matter is the grace and authority given by Christ Himself; and surely that grace and authority may be given—whether it is remains matter for investigation—as truly and as fully *via* the whole Church as *via* any order within this Church. I pass from this obvious point: I wish to speak on the question of what is the more intimate in religion and more reliable in fact. And to illuminate what is in one's mind, one may be pardoned for recalling a story told of Canon Liddon to the effect that, standing one day before the portrait of a particularly unspiritual-looking prelate, he remarked how singular it was "that *that person* was chosen in the providential order to connect Mr. Keble with the Apostles." One is a little sorry to associate the story with so fine a man as Liddon, and one cannot help wondering what a great

Apostle who wrote a certain letter to the Galatians would have said if he had overheard the remark. Now, of course, one can quite understand a distinction between character and office. Further, I appreciate the idea of "succession," which is not necessarily confined to episcopalians. But this whole theory of resting one's ministry on this long and, in some of its links, soiled chain is not religiously near enough nor historically certain enough for me to rest my ministry on. It is neither immediate in experience nor indisputable in fact, as the other view is. The Apostles are dead and have been dead a long time and are far away: the commissioning call of Christ is as living and as close as my own soul. The succession from bishop to bishop—including "that person" and his like—or from presbyter to presbyter, inscribed on the often illegible and not always reliable scroll of history, is a long and obscure story from which at least the possibility of error or defect cannot be excluded; the living Church exists and has assuredly never died. In a word, I am closer to Christ than I am to the Apostles, and I am surer of the Church than anyone

can be of the succession. So it seems better and even safer to rest one's ministry as one would rest salvation itself, on what is immediate in experience and unassailable in fact.

Chapter IV

Word and Sacrament

THE ministries in Christ's Church are manifold, and even the humblest of them may truly be regarded as a trust received from and a service rendered for Him. But there are two functions of special honour and responsibility which were named by the Lord in the commission He left with His disciples when He was parted from their sight. These are the preaching of the Word, and the ministration of the Sacraments. Those engaged in these forms of service are commonly described as being in "the Holy Ministry."

Now, the fundamental thing about the Word preached and the Sacraments ministered is that they are the Word and the Sacraments of the Gospel. The meaning of this will appear as we go on; but it is not irrelevant—indeed it is of primary importance—that, to begin with, we make clear to ourselves, even though it must be in the briefest possible way, what essenti-

ally and primarily the Gospel is. I say "essentially and primarily," for, of course, in its more general meaning, the Gospel is Jesus Christ, and it is true that everything about Him is Gospel. Still, we may ask what it is about Christ which makes Him the Gospel which should be proclaimed by the preacher and which is sealed in the Sacraments.

The student of religions naturally regards Christianity as a system of theological or philosophical ideas and of ethical ideals. Even by many within the Church, it is presented as a construing of the idea of God and of the World and of life in terms of such principles or categories as love and righteousness and sacrifice, which are principles in the mind and life of Jesus. And Christianity is so large a thing that what is said along such lines is not only true but Christian. Yet it is not any edifice of ideas and ideals, taken even from the teaching of Jesus, which makes the Christian Gospel. Such structures the human mind has often built and is continually building. But they are no more than edifices of conception till we know this—that they are based on ultimate

reality. The religious name for the ultimate reality is God. When, then, we scheme out the universe and life in terms of ideas and principles and categories such as love and sacrifice and forgiveness and righteousness, there are prior questions that need an answer. Is God loving? Does God forgive? Is sacrifice in God's character? Is God the supporter and vindicator of righteousness? These are the questions behind all our ideas and ideals, our categories and principles. They are questions of fact. They are to be answered not by philosophies but by *data*. The *data* of nature and of life hardly supply the answer. But Christianity is a Gospel because—before it is a philosophy or even an ethic—it is *data*. It is facts about ultimate reality—facts about God. It is *the new facts about God which have come into the region of known reality with the coming into history of Jesus Christ*. It is thus not primarily even Christ's view of God and life and the world; for we should still want to know the *data* on which that view—however we revere it and its author—is shown to be ultimately true. It is that Christ Himself—"the fact of Christ,"

if I may repeat a term which I am in the habit of using perhaps too often—is a fact about God. It is that He is so truly and uniquely related to God—how theology may express this comes much later—that the love and sacrifice and forgiveness and righteousness we see in Him are really facts about the character of God. That is Gospel. That is the news of fact we need first of all. Then we may construe the world in terms of all our idealistic categories, and apply to life—individual and social—the highest ethical principles ; but not till then. First is news of fact concerning God, and that is the news in the fact of Jesus Christ. And in Him—one must add it, even if in but a single sentence—it comes to us not as mere information, but with the reality and the passion of the life and death and living again of One in Whom it is all not just an *aufklärung*, but a redemption, and a salvation in which we are, for everything and for ever, His infinite debtors.

This—in the briefest and the barest terms—is the essential character of the Gospel as prior to and distinguishable from a philosophy or an ethic. It is God's facts be-

fore it is our theories ; it is what He has done before it is what we should do. It is this essential character of the Gospel which we should bear in mind as we look at the two outward instruments or channels of the Gospel which have been mentioned—the preaching of the Word and the Sacraments.

I do not propose here to discuss the former. This is not because it is unimportant or even secondary. On the contrary, preaching is named first in the Lord's commission. It was the main business of the greatest of the Apostles. In the New Testament it is presented as a channel of not less than regeneration and salvation. All souls, says one writer, are "begotten again through the Word preached"; while, says another, "it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Stronger than this, nothing could or can be said of any means of grace. No Church has the spirit of the New Testament or the mind of the Apostles, and no Church is carrying out duly its Lord's last commission, if it neglects preaching, or even if it disparages it in compari-

son with anything. It is, then, with no suggestion that the preaching of the Gospel is not primary and essential that I do not dwell on it here. It is simply because it does not seem to raise questions of what distinctively is Church principle as does the other topic of Sacrament. To the latter, therefore, we may pass.

“The Sacramental principle” is a favourite phrase with a group of modern writers who think to show its entire reasonableness by giving it a universal basis and finding it in the whole relationship of matter and spirit, body and soul, symbol and reality. Thus we are told that “handshaking is the sacrament of friendship : kissing, the sacrament of love ; the flag, the sacrament of the soldier’s honour.”¹ Of course, in one sense, this is a question of the use of words. But I do not think such a way of speaking is of such value philosophically as its exponents seem to imagine, for it contributes to an idealist construction of the universe no really philosophical category but only an inappropriate and loosely defined term. As regards its religious

¹ Gore’s *Body of Christ*, p. 38. *Vide* also Illingworth’s *Divine Immanence* and Paget’s essay in *Lux Mundi*.

value, to class the Christian Sacraments with kisses and flags, as illustrative of a common principle, is to put them under an air-pump and to evacuate them of just that which religiously makes them sacramental. "Grace is not the superlative of nature."¹ Perhaps a cross or a crucifix might be compared to a flag; but certainly not Baptism or the Lord's Supper. Augustine stated the sacramentally creative and constitutive thing more soundly when he said *accedit verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum*. To classify the naturally symbolical with the evangelically sacramental is to empty the latter religiously and is not to enrich the former philosophically.

Let us then be content to start with Augustine not from the universe but from the Gospel. And he can give us our next idea. It is Augustine—not, as many imagine, the Reformers of the sixteenth century—who coined for us the phrase "Word and Sacrament of the Gospel." The combination here is sound; we are easily led into error when either of these things is separated from the other. Christ has ap-

¹ Forsyth's *The Church and the Sacraments*, p. 265.

pointed both as channels or agencies of His saving grace in the Gospel. Neither saves of itself—neither the Word preached can save *verbo locuto*, nor can the Sacrament administered save *opere operato*. But both are used by Christ; and He is always there really to do what the one says and the other shows. Nor should one be exalted into a supernatural mystery beyond the other; the truly supernatural mystery is that which is behind them both—the power of the Gospel to save. In this and other ways, the more these two channels of the Gospel—Word and Sacrament—are thought of together and even used together the better. This, one may add, is illustrated, in complementary ways, in English and in Scottish use. The one service in the Church of England for which a sermon is prescribed is the Communion Service; and thus is the Sacrament associated with the preaching of the Gospel. In the Church of Scotland, in a Communion Service the sermon is (or was) called “the action sermon,” which is a phrase taken from the Latin *actio gratiarum*, meaning “the Eucharist”; and thus is the preaching associated with the

Sacrament. All this, of course, does not mean that there should never be the Sacrament without a sermon or a sermon without the Sacrament ; but it does mean that they are co-agencies for one end and that end is the Gospel.

This joining together of Word and Sacrament as each an agency or means of the Gospel helps us to clear our minds about the indispensability for salvation which is sometimes claimed especially for Baptism. Some half-score of texts in the New Testament more or less explicitly associate salvation or regeneration with Baptism. On the other hand, no candid reader can deny that if one thing is clearly said in the New Testament it is that we are saved by faith in Christ. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," is not a casual but is the characteristic declaration of the evangel ; and, if the rite of outward Baptism be indispensable for salvation, that declaration is not true, for it omits an essential. These two positions—one associating salvation with Baptism and the other holding it forth without mention of Baptism—are not contradictory and indeed present no real

problem if we remember, first, that the Sacrament is not a magical ceremony but is a channel of the Gospel, and, secondly, that it is not the sole channel. If it is a channel of the Gospel it may be a means of salvation ; if it is not the sole channel it cannot be described as indispensable. And this, which is fair to the New Testament, is also true to the facts of Christendom. I add that the feeling, which is plain—it was not so much argued as accepted—in the primitive Church that Baptism had not less than an integral place in a convert's reception of Christ and his recognition as a Christian is very intelligible. It is not to be treated, as Protestant writers are tempted to do, as an incipient stage of what later became the dogma that this Sacrament is necessary for salvation. It was not so much part of the sacramental theory of the Church as part of her practical experience. It is part of the practical experience of the Church—even the evangelical Church—still. Missionaries, for example, often find that it is really an element in not less than a man's conversion that he be openly baptized. Now, the Church of the New Testament and of the

sub-Apostolic age was a missionary Church and also a persecuted Church ; and it is not too much to say that a man living in these circumstances and faced with the choice between Christ and paganism was really and practically not a Christian if he would not openly receive the outward sacramental seal. Thus the feeling in the early Church about the importance of Baptism was something quite true in the practical life of the Christian society. It is quite another thing to erect this into the dogma that without Baptism is no possibility of human salvation. This is true neither to the New Testament nor to fact ; and, as was shown a moment ago, it is a view which does not arise when we regard the Word preached and the Sacrament as both means of the Gospel.¹

Let us now go on to look a little more closely at the idea of the Sacraments as things of the Gospel. It is plain that preaching has this character, and that it should be essentially a presentation of the truth and grace and life which are in Christ.

¹ This paragraph is practically taken from an essay on " Grace and Sacrament " which the writer contributed to the volume entitled *Towards Reunion*.

But this is even more strictly true of the Sacraments. Preaching may at times quite justifiably be occupied with secondary and what one may describe as suburban aspects of truth, and yet be Christian and even evangelical. But the Sacraments focus on and are confined to the very central and the ultimate truths of the Gospel, and to the primary and essential realities of the Christian life. What these ultimate truths and essential realities are was indicated in the opening section of this chapter about the Gospel. To begin with is the character of God—His love and fatherly care for His children. Well, there is a little child, who knows nothing of God and can bring or give nothing to God; and the Sacrament of Baptism writes that child's name among God's family and God's care and love and grace are pledged to it. Or, again, there is the matter of forgiveness of sin. Well, there, in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is the Bread broken and there is the Wine poured out, and these things done in Christ's name—done, verily, by Christ—are the Gospel of the redemption wrought for us by the Saviour at untellable cost.

Once again, there is the soul's need of grace and strength for life. Well, look still at that Communion ritual, and see there the Bread eaten and the Wine drunk, and that is the Gospel that Christ is our life and that the souls of His people feed on Him. All the Gospel—and nothing but the Gospel—is in these things. And it is in them not merely a picture or sign, but as reality; for, I repeat, Christ is always there really to do what these outward elements and actions show. It is this which has given especially to the Sacrament of the Eucharist an imperishable value and power, even when it has been distorted by human error. The reader must permit me to speak here as one who regards much of the doctrine of the mediæval Mass as grave and even gross misconception of the Gospel. But I go on, nevertheless, in the words of a man who was as decided a Protestant intellectual as ever lived, but who had also such a passionate sense of these truths and realities of the Gospel that he could speak thus even in a Scottish Presbyterian pulpit:

“For generations, Protestants have been

accustomed to denounce the Mass of the Roman Church as idolatrous, superstitious, materialistic, and I know not what else—and all with perfect truth; yet the Mass, as everyone knows, is the heart of that Church's strength. Why is that so? It is because underneath all the incrustations of materialism, superstition, and priestly assumption, the ultimate truth of the Gospel lies hidden—the truth which the cup of the Lord presents to us—that here and now the love which bears and bears away the sin of the world has come to meet us and graciously offers itself to us. The Gospel, it might be said, is buried in the Mass; but, when you have done your worst in this way to the Gospel you have done no more than to bury it alive; you cannot kill it, and through all its encumbering grave-clothes it will thrill and subdue the hearts of men. There could be no stauncher Protestant than I; but if the Protestant Churches disparage the Sacraments and dissipate the Divine realities to which they bear witness, then the Roman Church, in spite of its superstition and its tyranny, will prevail against

them, and it will have a divine right to prevail.”¹

There is the Gospel in the Sacrament—imperishably in it.

From this idea of the Sacraments as essentially acts of the Gospel there are important deductions to be drawn as to Christ's part in them and ours. He is the Author and the Actor of the Gospel. If, then, the Sacraments show the Gospel, they show something which He does, not—at least primarily—something which man does. We are not indeed passive; but our part is a recognizing and a receiving of what Christ says and does, and not an initial action of our own. It may seem simple and undeniable to say this in word. But it is, if not denied, at least obscured in respect of both of the Sacraments by alike the “low” and the “high” extreme of sacramental doctrine and practice. Let me make clear what I mean.

There are many people, especially in

¹ The late Principal Denney, *The Way Everlasting*, p. 232. If I may, I should like to recommend English readers to acquaint themselves with Denney. No man of recent days surpasses him for accuracy in scholarship, keenness of intellect, and a heart passionately Christian.

Churches of the evangelical type, whose main and indeed sole idea of Baptism is that it is a person publicly professing his Christian faith and allegiance, or, in the case of an infant, of others doing this for him or dedicating him to Christ. This element of human action has its place—I have just been indicating how real its place was in the early Church and may be still—and without anything of this nature, this Sacrament would lose its ethical purport. But it is not and it must not be made the primary and characteristic thing. The primary and characteristic thing is the Gospel; and my dedicating either myself or my child to be a Christian is not itself the Gospel. The Gospel is what God does. This is the primary and the characteristic thing in this Sacrament. It is God relating Himself and His saving grace to the child; and that is a far deeper and a far more evangelical thing than any man's Christian profession or promise. I think that if those who reject infant-Baptism—a question on which there is little or nothing new to be said on either side and which I do not propose to rediscuss here—would view it not in the

light of what the child can do, who of course, can do nothing, but of what the child's Heavenly Father can do, Who surely can do much for the soul as for the body of even a little child, they might perceive at least that there is a Gospel in this Sacrament. It is a Gospel which may well be dear to the heart of every human father or mother. It is not rightly, on the strength of two or three isolated texts, described under the term "regeneration." Augustine and other fathers guard against that generalization.¹ It is rather a Sacrament of the Gospel of the love and fatherhood of God. But what is right is to make what God says and does in it primary and predominant. Baptism is not someone on earth taking an infant to be his god-child and promising for it that it will be a Christian—the latter a thing no human being can, with any sort of ethical reality, do for another. It is God taking the child to be *His* child and promising to be its Father and Saviour. That is Gospel.

Now, having said this about Baptism, I

¹ e.g. in *Commentary on Ps. lxxvii.* Cf. Origen, *Hom. in Num.* iii. 1: "Not all who are bathed in water are forthwith bathed in the Holy Spirit."

go on to say—and I shall try to say it with ever tender regard to the religious feelings of those who will differ—that the same kind of error (as I cannot but call it) is seen in the view of the Eucharist which makes that Sacrament more conspicuously something which we do or offer Godward, than something which God does or offers towards us. There is an act and there is even an offering on our part. But, as we saw in regard to Baptism, so here also, anything we do is not the central sacramental thing. What Christ says and does is sacramentally central and supreme. And what it is that He says and does in this Sacrament is plain from His Institution of it. He did not, in the Upper Room, actually make sacrifice for sin to God: that He did on the Cross. But in the Upper Room He took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to His disciples saying, “This is My Body.” The Sacrament of the Eucharist is Christ still saying this, still doing this. And the most authentic eucharistic ritual—and the “highest,” albeit also the simplest—is that which culminates in His Word spoken and His Body given to us rather than in

any word or act of ours towards God.¹ The Missal of the Roman Church is a structure which no enlightened Christian mind can study unimpressed, and the moment in it when the priest, on behalf of the people, holds up to God the oblation of the Host is a moment which has been sacred for generations to millions of faithful and adoring Christians. But, quite deliberately and not in any controversial spirit, I will say that that is an even greater moment when, in the simplest evangelical ritual of Communion, the minister, being Christ's minister, speaking and acting not for the people towards God, but for Christ towards the people—and therefore rightly, as in the primitive Church, facing them—says, "This is My Body," and Christ, Who through His unworthy servant is the Celebrant, gives Himself to believing and living souls. Christ Himself speaking, Christ Himself blessing, Christ Himself giving—that is the supreme sacramental thing. Nothing can be higher or holier

¹ In the Institution, Christ said "This is My Body" not in a prayer to God but to the communicants. In such a matter, "the Lord's own service" should be conducted in the Lord's own way.

or more than that. It is the unspeakable gift and the Giver in one. And, in that moment, the truest worship is not occupied with what we offer, but is absorbed in what Christ says, does, gives. This is eucharistic worship ; and it is real when, in the evangelical Sacrament, Christ's own voice is heard—the very voice in the very words heard in the Upper Room—as when, in the Sacrifice of the Altar, the sanctus-bell sends the faithful to their knees.

The last sentence leads me to say a word on what is called “the Real Presence.” It is a mistaken and a serious misrepresentation to assume or assert that what I have been describing as the sacramental—as distinguished from the sacrificial—view of the Eucharist denies that Christ is verily present in the service of this sacred rite. So far is this from being the case, that I say unhesitatingly that it is in the evangelical Sacrament rather than in the sacrificial Mass that we have the larger and worthier conception of Christ's presence. It is a greater thought that He is present in the entire Sacrament than that He is located in

the elements which are but a part of it ;¹ that He is in it from the beginning than that He comes at the moment of the consecration ; and—what is more important than either of these points—that He is here not as the offered oblation but as the Celebrant. This is the greater doctrine of the Real Presence. Especially should we assert the last position—that Christ is truly the Celebrant. It is both a nobler conception and one far less open to materialistic error to say that Christ is in the evangelical *acts* of the Sacrament than to identify His presence with the material elements which are—I use the word without irreverence—the apparatus of it. It is Christ Who *speaks*, Who *blesses*, Who *breaks*, Who *gives*. What these actions say and do, He really says and does. That is the Sacramental meaning of the presence, and it is real as the acts themselves are. It is a living Christ Who is present in the Sacrament ; and

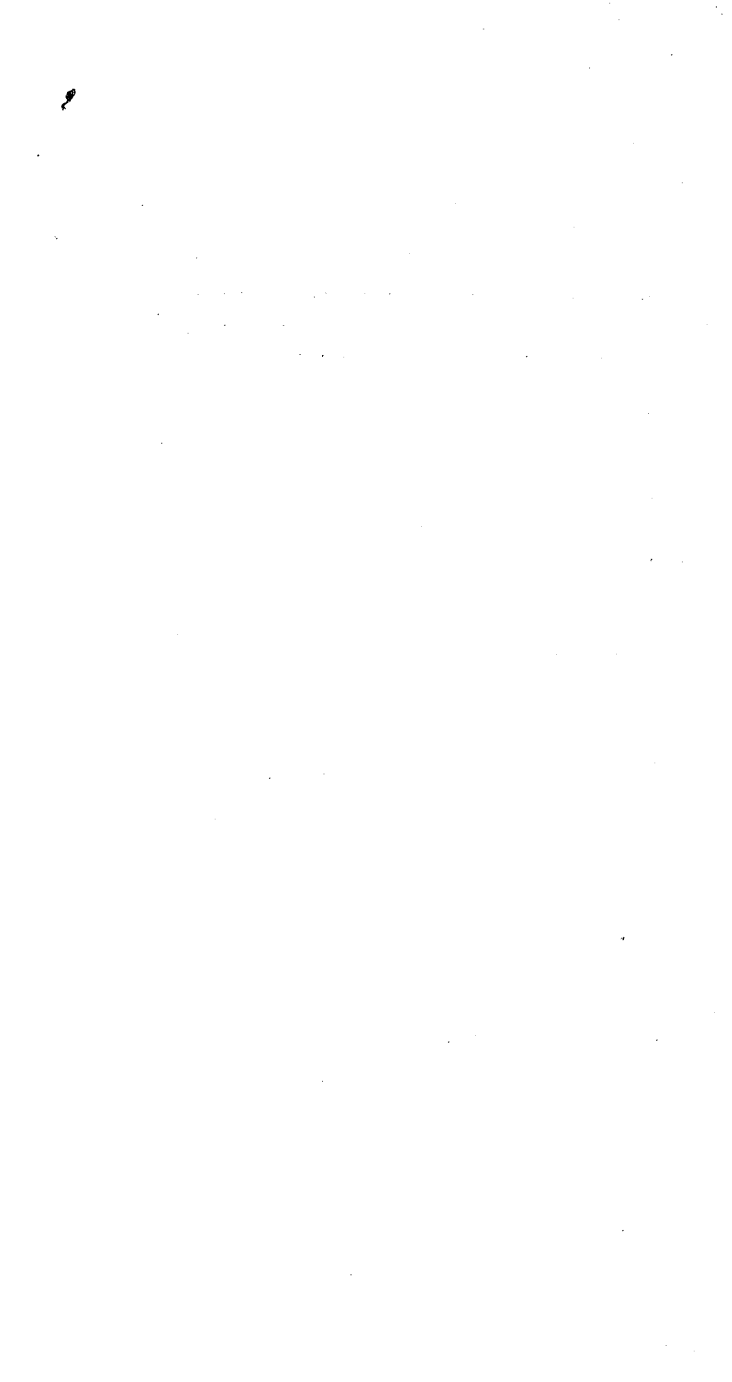
¹ The word “sacrament” is constantly used as if it were equivalent to the elements, which are but a part of it, as when people speak of “reserving the Sacrament” or “praying before the Sacrament.” The part is not the whole.

everything which is sacramental in it, He does.

And, in closing these few and fragmentary words on this subject, I venture to suggest that here a point of contact might be found with those who place a supreme and sacred value, both doctrinally and devotionally, on the association of the Eucharist with the eternal sacrifice of Christ. This is something deep in the convictions and dear to the hearts of many Christians; and, in rejecting false expressions of it, one would desire to be not merely negative but rather to reach what of truth is behind them. When that association is carried to the degree of making the Eucharist a repetition or renewal of Christ's sacrifice, it becomes both unevangelical and unscriptural. And when it is made to rest on the *conversio* of the elements, it not only becomes involved in very difficult and most controversial matters (into which I refrain from entering), but also, as we have seen, changes the whole character and direction of the Sacrament. Is there not any fact—and our theology on this high and mystical topic, as on any other, can

stand only if it stand on spiritual fact—which is neither unevangelical nor unsacramental and which yet can bind together the earthly service and the eternal offering? There is. It is the Lord Himself, at once the true Celebrant at the Church's Eucharist and also the High Priest Who is the sacrifice for the sins of the world and Who ever liveth to make intercession. This does not mean in any way that now we offer or even that we present that Divine Sacrifice. It does not mean that the Sacrament changes its character. Christ's sacrifice is still His only; the Sacrament remains a Sacrament still. But it does mean a real association—the most real, for nothing is more real in religion than what Christ is and does—between the earthly Eucharist of the redeemed and the eternal sacrifice of the Redeemer. I do not attempt to formulate a doctrine of this; it is better perceived in vision than analysed in terms. I know there are minds to whom it is all a spurious sacramentarian mysticism; but let such, for the moment, forbear. There are souls—the writer does not claim to be worthy to be counted with them, but,

in any statement of the manifold meaning of the Sacrament he would wish to include them—for whom, at the Holy Communion, not only the walls of the place where they are worshipping fall away, so that they see themselves part of the great fellowship of the whole Church Catholic, but also the walls of the world itself, so that in coming to the Sacrament, they come indeed to “the heavenly Jerusalem” and to “innumerable hosts of angels” and to “the spirits of just men made perfect,” and—above all—to “Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant” and to “the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel.” Their eyes, which by faith see Him presiding at the Communion Table, are lifted up to see Him also their great High Priest in heavenly places. Such souls of true mystic vision know how the earthly Eucharist is united to the eternal Sacrifice—not by anything in what they do, not by a miracle in the material elements, but through the Lord. They know it when, to the *Sursum corda*, they respond, *Habemus ad Dominum*.



PREACHING is the spoken word, and Sacraments are (in Augustine's phrase) *verba visibilia*. A new channel or instrument of the Gospel was found by the Church in the written word ; and of this we must now go on to speak.

That a literature about Christ and the Christian teaching should arise is natural in itself and was particularly so in the early Church, which, being mainly composed of Jews, was accustomed to the use of Scripture, and indeed never gave up what we now call the Old Testament even when the separation of Christianity with Jewish legalism was complete. With the Jewish Scripture apostolic and other Christian writings were associated ; and one may remark that we are apt to fail to realize how great a step it was for the Church, inheriting the law and the prophets and their immense authority, to put any man's—even an apostle's—writings on a par with them. These Christian books or

letters were read in the public services of the congregation, and this was practically a sifting of them. Some were soon dropped. Some—such as the series of visions and parables called the *Shepherd of Hermas*, which was a kind of *Pilgrim's Progress* in its day—were popular for a time. Others proved permanently valuable to the soul of the Church. Collections began to be made of the writings which most successfully stood this test of the survival of the spiritually fittest. The process was gradual, and certain books hovered a while on the borderland. But eventually the list was narrowed down to writings which commanded a general acceptance as authentic accounts of Christ or as apostolic presentations of the faith built on Christ. No doctrine of what we call inspiration was discussed ; no question of inerrancy was raised. The determining principle, or rather instinct, was to include only what most essentially and authoritatively preserved or interpreted Christ for the Church. The result attained by this Christian instinct has justified itself most remarkably in the ages. Of the books included in the New Testament canon, the Second Epistle of Peter—which was not

finally admitted till late in the fourth century—has had its position questioned; while Luther, in one of his moments of violent assertion (which were many) called the Epistle of James “strawy.” But the striking fact about the New Testament is this—that, though theoretically the canon is still open, the Church, which has had neither scruple nor difficulty in adding to its list of saints, has never had even to consider the suggestion of adding to its Scriptures. Nineteen centuries of literature have produced nothing quite fitted to be put in the Bible. A volume of which this is true can meet the opinions of superior persons with a considerable degree of equanimity.

It was not, however, till somewhat late in the Church’s history—not till the time of the Reformation—that what the Bible really is was brought home, or brought home again, to the minds and hearts of Christian people. In the mediæval Church, the Scriptures had little or no place in experimental religious life. The soul was nourished by the Sacraments and Christ was found—as we have seen He can be found—in the Mass. The Bible was employed for quite other ends—as a source (along with the writings of the

fathers) of theological knowledge and as a dictionary of dogma. Thus the question of what essentially the Bible is and what it is spiritually capable of being did not arise. The Reformation was what brought this to the front as a living issue ; or rather one should say it was the spiritual experience of Luther that did it. I know there are many to-day who for various reasons are hostile to the name of Luther ; and it is easy so to be, for he was a man of mountainous magnitude, and his faults, like everything else about him, were on the big scale. I hold no brief for many things in Luther and Lutheranism ; but this one thing I will say about him—that if ever man found Christ, it was that young monk. Now—and this is what concerns our present purpose—how and where did young Luther find the light and the grace and the Gospel of Christ ? It was by reading the New Testament. And this was not less than the discovery that the Bible is far more than a reference book of doctrine, the function of which is to prove what the Church teaches, but is a book of living, experimental religion in which God really meets with the conscience and heart and soul and by which He verily leads

them to Christ. We mistake the attitude of the Reformation to the Bible if we do not see that this was the great thing. Luther translated the Bible, but that had been done before ; he put it into the hands of the laity, but it had never explicitly or wholly—though it had practically—been withdrawn from them ; he appealed to it in controversy, but so did his opponents. The original and the invaluable thing which he did was to reveal the Bible as a new book—a book by which the living God speaks, in which the saving Christ is found, on which the soul may feed its spiritual life. It is often said that the Reformation set up an infallible book in place of an infallible Pope. The idea of infallibility—in any literal sense—arose later ; and the unceremonious remark of Luther about the Epistle of James shows he was not careful about that. What the Reformation did was to give men a book of living religion instead of a dictionary of theological dogma. And this is just to say that it gave them the true idea of what the Bible is.

I have begun this chapter in this historical way because it is precisely this idea of what the Bible really and essentially

is which we must have clear in our minds if we are to apply right principles to the questions—to some Christians' minds, the disturbing and distressing questions—which have arisen in modern times as to the inspiration and infallibility and authority of Holy Scripture. We are all aware that to-day the Bible is tested, as regards its historical or scientific statements, exactly as any other book would be ; and there can be no dubiety that the result is that it is impossible to claim that the narratives are free from inaccuracies or that the cosmology is what can be called science. This is the result which causes, to some, disturbance and distress, because to them it seems to destroy or, at least, to discredit the Bible as the Word of God to man. If we look at the matter carefully and quietly, we shall, I think, find that the perturbation is a mistake, and that the Bible is what it essentially is whatever may be said by criticism on such matters as those I have mentioned. I wish to speak about this as plainly as possible, for it is a question on which the voice of the Churches has not spoken to people so frankly as it should have done.

First, let us perceive that the revelation

of God to our souls is one thing and the manner of the record of that revelation is another. Revelation is God speaking to us and dealing with us in outward history and in personal experience. The Bible is not the revelation itself, but is the record and interpretation of that revelation. Now, what—if it is to discharge its task—must such a record be, and what need it not be? It must be a genuine account of the way in which God has spoken to and dealt with men; and it must bring us to realize that it is God Himself Who has thus spoken and dealt, and that He still speaks to us and deals graciously and savingly with us. If the Bible does this, it adequately and indeed fully serves the end of a record of the Divine revelation. This the Bible does do unchallengeably. It has done it age after age. This is its inspiration and even infallibility: it is inspired and it is even infallible *for its end*, which is to acquaint us with what God has said and done for man's salvation and to convince our souls that the same God speaks to us still. Now, if the Bible be this, need it be other or more than this? In particular, need it be also an historical narrative, the details of which, even in

matters only incidentally related to the essentially revealing word or act of God, are absolutely and supernaturally guaranteed? Or need it, in telling us how God's salvation has assuredly come into this very world, be able to give a divinely informed description of the structure of the world into which that has come? Let us put the same question the other way. Would the value of the Bible, as a genuine account of what God has said and done, which convinces us that it was God Who said and did it, that God still speaks to us and deals with us—would the value, I say, of the Bible as such a record be destroyed if it be found to be written by men, indeed inspired of God to see the profound religious meaning of what they were telling, but endowed with no preternatural omniscience about historical or scientific details which do not enter into the substance of that revelation, and who, on these matters, shared the limitations of the knowledge of their times? I do not see that, in such circumstances, the Bible in the least degree becomes less than it was. That God was leading and teaching the people of Israel is and remains true as a great and essential fact of revelation,

even though the narrators of it had crude cosmological ideas and make mistakes in the stories of kings or battles. Even in the story of the life of Jesus, whether it was one man or whether there were two men whose eyes were opened at Jericho, the manifestation of the Divine compassion was the same. There is in all this no genuine problem for faith and there is no occasion for any kind of fear lest the Bible is being destroyed.

How, then, is it that so many Christian minds have been distressed in this matter and that even the cry of heresy has been raised over it? The reason is that many people have got into a way of assuming that due reverence to the Word of God involves that it should not be associated, even in matters not essential to it as the Word of God, with any kind of human imperfection. But this is a false kind of reverence. The true reverence is just to ask what, as a matter of fact, God *has* done about His Word to men—not what we imagine He *should* have done. We may think He should have preserved it in a record which not merely genuinely recorded it and spiritually interpreted it, but also was, in itself, a miracle of historical and scientific

omniscience. Consider the result if it had been so. In the first place, the Bible would have been an entirely un-human book with no kind of human reality about it. But in the second place and more seriously, this kind of infallibility in it would have defeated its own end. We should have been so occupied with the miraculous book that we should never have got beyond it. But the Bible never serves its end till we pass from the words of the book to the Word—the voice—of God. It is like the angel in the Johannine Apocalypse, “who shewed us these things,” and who, if we fall down and worship at its feet, replies, “See thou do it not: worship God.” We are not meant to worship the Bible; we are meant simply to learn from it God’s ways of salvation and to hear in it God’s own voice to us. That we do learn and do hear; and to learn and hear miraculously more than that—about history and about science—would not help us to learn and hear it better, and would indeed confuse the message with what is secondary and unimportant and with what God need not tell us in the Bible because He has written it elsewhere. So the record which has been given us

is—alike in its Divine perfection as regards its end, and also in its human imperfections as regards what is not its end—wisely given. This is one of the many instances where the foolishness of God is wiser than men. But it is a strange thing—a thing most illuminative of this nature of ours—that, while we are willing to admit and cannot but admit that God is better than we are, very slowly do we concede that He is wiser than we are.

I cannot dwell longer on this. But these few words may be sufficient to make clear the main position of what the Bible essentially is, and that it neither is nor need be more than that. I repeat it—once get hold of what the Bible is and is meant for, and these critical problems can be relegated to their due position; and indeed they largely settle themselves.

There is, however, one aspect of this subject where the issue for faith is not quite so simple as what has been said in the foregoing paragraphs seems to imply. We have been drawing a line of demarcation between, on the one hand, the Word or message or voice of God in Scripture to our hearts and consciences, and, on the other, such external

matters as the text or authorship or points of secular and scientific fact ; and the demarcation is valid. But there is one sphere in which, in Christianity, it cannot be laid down absolutely. That sphere is the historical in its larger aspect. There need be no problem about mere unimportant details in the narrative—differing accounts of an incident or trifles of that sort. But, in the large sense, Christianity is a religion rooted in history. It is based on great events ; and, if these were historically undermined, Christianity as we know it would change its whole countenance and character. In particular is this true of the great events connected with Christ—His coming, and living, and dying and rising again. Again I say we need not be concerned about every detail in the narrative ; but the broad historical facts are part of Christianity. I cannot accept the view of those who maintain faith and history as being entirely independent of each other because existing on different planes of knowledge. This is an alluring view. But it will not do in Christianity, which is a religion of great facts as well as great thoughts, and its great facts are not less than essential for

its faith. If, for example, Christ's be not a real and historical life, the Gospel, which is not His ideas but Himself, simply evaporates. There are thus places where spiritual truth and historical actuality coincide; and, indeed, it is just that coincidence of the outward and the inward in faith which (as I shall show in closing this chapter) assures us that the latter is more than a subjective impression. What, then, is to be said of this historical element as it is found in the Bible? What is to be said on it is that the broad historical bases of faith can and do come through criticism safe. I repeat I do not speak of immaterial details. But—these aside—Christ *is* a real person and His life *is* an historical life. Indeed I think faith should go further than that. Faith may be and is so sure of God revealed in the fact of Christ that it is entitled to maintain that, whatever criticism may think of the accuracy of the report of this or that point in the story, it is impossible and inconceivable that the Christian religion be deprived of a real and adequate historical basis. It is certainly true that all facts are God's facts. That is true of the ascer-

tained results of criticism or of science. But it is also true of the assured experiences of religion. And I submit that the assured spiritual reality of the Biblical religion which centres and culminates in Christ has a right to count as having value in the question of the truth of Christianity as an historical religion. To put it definitely, while criticism has a very good right to point out discrepancies and errors in the Gospel narratives, faith has an equally good right to say that Christ is no myth. Thus should religious faith and historical criticism be colleagues rather than rivals or enemies. A man who cannot recognize them as such hardly is a believing man—one who believes in God, Who in Christ is “grace” and “truth.”

In passing from this topic of the Scriptures to another, I wish to say two things, each in a word. One is that protagonists of criticism who are also men in sympathy with religious feeling should have a Christian consideration where they find their view evokes perplexity and pain. They must always remember what was said in the early part of this chapter—that to very many people the Bible is a home of faith, a means of quiet and sure intercourse with

God concerning the deepest things of life and of the soul. If, then, these people are made anxious by critical views of the Bible, it is not merely their opinions which are disturbed—that would matter little—but something at the heart of their religious life. To disturb this, even in the name of truth, is not to be done rudely. I am speaking not of the ecclesiastical obscurantist, with whom I have no sympathy, but of souls like Cowper's lace-worker, who

“just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true.”

But while this is to be said—and remembered—it must also be said that there is a plain duty of honesty and frankness lying on the Churches, and especially on those who teach in the Churches from the pulpit or otherwise, in dealing with this matter. That inquiring minds to-day should be turned aside from Christ and hampered in finding Christ because the Gospel is presented to them as indispensably bound up with an intellectually disproved doctrine of the verbal inerrancy of every line in Scripture is disastrous. It is surely not impossible for the Church's teachers to-day to be at once considerate towards faith and candid towards truth. Moreover, let it

always be remembered that those who hold what may be called the traditional view and those who hold the critical view, when they are Christian and believing men, while they may differ as to what the Bible is not—that it is not inerrant in certain matters—profoundly agree in what religiously and spiritually it is. I close what I have to say on this subject by restating this in words which not the most rigid conservative could improve and yet which came from the lips of one of the most eminent protagonists of criticism :

“ If I am asked why I receive Scripture as the Word of God and as the only perfect rule of faith and life, I answer with all the fathers of the Protestant Church, *Because the Bible is the only record of the redeeming love of God, because in the Bible alone I find God drawing near to man in Jesus Christ and declaring to us in Him His will for our salvation. And this record I know to be true by the witness of His Spirit in my heart, whereby I am assured that none other than God Himself is able to speak such words to my soul.*”¹

¹ Quoted in an article on “ Professor W. Robertson Smith’s Doctrine of Scripture ” in *The Expositor*, Fourth Series, Volume X.

If we can all agree to these memorable words of William Robertson Smith, we are agreed enough in our faith regarding Holy Scripture.

I pass on now to speak, in what remains of this chapter, of another class of writings which the Church has regarded not, indeed, as inspired in the sense in which the Bible is, but as, in a peculiar degree, authoritative for faith. I mean the Catholic Creeds. And again we may begin with history.

Something of a credal character was inherent from the beginning in the Christian message—as may be seen in the baptismal formula—and this naturally received expansion both as an expression of the common faith and as a basis for the teaching given to catechumens. The great Creeds, however, are of a much more elaborate character and arose in a different way. When Christianity came into the Greek intellectual world, the Greek mind took hold of it and tried to make a world-philosophy of it, which came to be called Gnosticism. The Church—or that part of it which most clearly realized and was most faithful to the essence of the

Gospel—felt this was a philosophy which undermined real Christianity. Gnosticism therefore compelled the Church to think out and even put in words a counter-statement of the faith. Thus, the Apostles' Creed (as it is called) shuts out Gnostic ideas of creation in its very first clause. Gnosticism, I repeat, made the Church think, and think out, what the Gospel intellectually involves. Similarly—and, indeed, even more distinctly—when, later, Arianism arose, with ways of speaking of who Jesus is and of His relation to God which the genuine Christian mind and instinct felt subverted the whole Gospel, the Church had to try to meet this with a Christian statement of who Jesus is and of His relation to God. If Gnosticism had made the Church think, now Arianism forced upon it the alternatives in the ways of thinking about Christ; and these were laboriously worked out in the Creeds of Nicæa and Constantinople. Let us understand, then, that these great—and, often, difficult, abstruse, complicated—Creeds were not manufactured out of a sheer lust for theologizing. They were an answer. To produce them was not less than an

urgent duty ; and the Church would have been chargeable with intellectual cowardice if it had evaded that duty. With the discharge of this duty came very real dangers. Christianity, which is primarily a message to the heart and conscience, tended to become too much intellectualized ; the Church, which is the society of those in union with Christ, was regarded rather as a school of doctrine ; and—worst of all—a man easily thought he was a Christian and was indeed counted a Christian if only he was orthodox. These dangers were not escaped at the time and they are real still. Nevertheless, the credal work of the fourth century was a religious and intellectual duty ; and it was greatly—and as time has shown—durably done.

For such reasons, no informed student need hesitate in giving a great historical place to the ecumenical Creeds of the Church. Further, the Church has a duty to declare its catholic and historic faith, and this can be done, in a corporate way, only through some common—and, if possible, ecumenical—Creed. This corporate witness is the main use of the ancient

creeds—which are of little or no use as tests of dogmatic orthodoxy and are not suited to be expressions of personal religious faith—and, for the purpose of this witness, what is known as the Nicene Creed can still discharge a function which no other credal statement can.¹ Up to this point, the Creeds call for recognition and not criticism. But ecclesiastical tradition would take them beyond this, and often would try to give them a finality of authority which denies to the Church any right to criticize them or alter them or pass from them. In a word, it would make the Church the Church of the Creeds, instead of keeping the Creeds the Creeds of the Church. This is to be resisted. It is to be resisted not by any belittling of the fathers who made the Creeds, but for quite distinct reasons of another kind.

For one thing, the ancient Creeds were written and could not but be written in the language of their age. Now, in the course of time, language changes and often

¹ Though I may be allowed to add that, personally, I think the best catholic creed is the *Te Deum*. It is not only less metaphysical, but it is *glad* in its faith, as faith should be. A creed need not always be sung, but it should be singable.

deteriorates. Terms, like men, grow old ; and when they have grown old, they lose their original vitality. They may lose even their original meaning, so that they come actually to misrepresent the very truths they once aptly and accurately expressed. The great words of religion and theology are not exempt from this change. It is true, for example, of the word "Person" as used in the statement of the doctrine of the Trinity. Every modern teacher or preacher, discussing that doctrine to-day, must begin by saying that "person" does not mean "person." It is true of the crucial term in the Nicene Creed. The whole conception of "substance" as applied to the nature of God is a piece of fourth-century Greek metaphysics. No modern philosopher would use such a category, with its implicit materialism, of the Absolute Being ; and no modern theologian finds it of any help in a discussion to-day about Jesus to say He was "of the same substance of the Father." Athanasius was entirely right to insist on it, though it is not a Scriptural phrase, because this was the one expression which—if the word may be permitted—

cornered the Arians and ruled out Arianism ; and it is no meticulous orthodoxy but the most unbiassed reading of the historical situation which recognizes that on that issue "the very existence of Christianity was at stake."¹ But to regard this *ad hoc* terminology as having about it any finality or even for us any special suitableness is unreasonable. I would to-day rather say in simple English that Christ was of God *Himself*.² It is thus one thing to accept the truth that is in the doctrine of the ancient Creeds ; it is quite another thing to attempt to tie down the thoughtful Christian mind of to-day to their terminology. We adhere to the Nicene faith ; we cannot echo the Nicene formulas.

But more must be said than merely that the language of the ancient Creeds

¹ Bury's *History of the Later Roman Empire*, i, 88. The cheap idea that the struggle between the *Homoiousians* and the *Homoiousians* was a fight over a diphthong is not worthy of the attention of any serious historical student.

² Newman, of whom one might say that he lived both in the nineteenth century and also in the fourth, has the modern "simple English" and the ancient metaphysical Greek in the lines—

"God's presence—and His very *Self*
And *Essence* all Divine."

is not final. Their content is not complete. All human expressions of the faith are unfinished work, because the truth is a living and a growing thing. Of course, there are permanent and settled elements in the historic faith of the Church; and a consent to these echoes from age to age as from heart to heart. To these settled elements and of this continued consent, the Catholic Creeds are a great testimony. Yet the Church must resist the temptation—and it is a temptation, both mentally and ecclesiastically—to settle down to any human formulation of even central truths as if it were God's last word upon them. It is good to love truth; but to stand still in truth is not worthily to love it, for, as has just been said, it is a living and a growing thing. There is, thus, a legitimate and an essentially Christian doctrine of "development" in Christian doctrine. I do not mean this in the merely rationalist sense of a general progress in human knowledge and thought. Nor do I mean it in the Roman sense—so interestingly expounded by Newman in his notable essay on the subject—by which tradition may add to faith. I mean that, while we

believe that all truth for faith has been fully and finally given in Christ, the Church is only gradually learning what is in Him. Let us clearly distinguish between the perfect revelation and the imperfect apprehension of that revelation—still more, the very imperfect and temporary articulation of it. This ultimately means that the authority for truth in the Church can never be anything out of its past utterances. It must be something new as well as old—something as real and as living to-day as in the fourth century or the sixteenth. It is, in a word, the living Spirit taking of the things of Christ and ever leading the Church to see Him afresh. We must vehemently resist the idea that the Holy Spirit spoke to the Church for some four centuries or so, but has said hardly anything of essential truth about Christ since. But, how shall the Church still hear that voice leading it into truth? To this question there are in Christendom varying answers, and especially two—one from the Churches of the Reformation, the other from the Church of the Vatican Council. The latter answer is that the Roman Pope, in his *ex cathedra* utterances,

is the infallible channel of that Divine voice. The claim is repudiated by every intelligent mind outside the Roman obedience; but I (who, of course, join in that repudiation) have always felt that there was a great and true idea there, however monstrously mis-stated—the idea, namely, that no dead documents but a living word is the authority for faith in the Church.¹ We can maintain this idea without committing ourselves to the historical impossibilities involved in the dogma of papal infallibility or without being reduced to the uninspiring substitute of a mere historical appeal to the first six Christian centuries. A living Church must claim to regard as its supreme authority for faith the Holy Spirit still speaking in the Word of God in Scripture and still opening up to our apprehension the truth that is there. It is not simply the Bible, but the Spirit speaking in and from the Bible; and He speaks not merely to the individual

¹ Renan says of this: "*le plus magnifique coup d'état de cette grande institution [i.e. the Catholic Church]. . . est de s'être substituée, elle vivante, agissante, à une autorité muette*" (*Essais Religieux*. 388). But the Roman Church has not made *itself* the authority; nor is the Bible an *autorité muette*.

but to the Christian mind of the community of believing people. And so—and to conclude what I have to say on this—when ecclesiastics would make even the great Creeds of the past a final word, we must, while giving all due honour to these landmarks in the progress of truth, reply in the words of John Robinson, the Pilgrim father, that we are “very confident that the Lord hath more truth and light yet to break forth out of His Holy Word.”

On this matter, I will add—though it would be going beyond what is strictly of Church principles to urge it now—that, out of this, may, and indeed, I think, does come to the Church to-day a real question or practical duty. I am no advocate of spasmodic and miscellaneous experiments in creed-making. Moreover, in the present divided state of Christendom, a modern Creed could not secure that catholic consensus which gives a Creed weight. Still, admitting this, I do feel, and I am sure that many feel, that for our Churches, living in the intellectual atmosphere of the modern world, to be able, when asked to say what they most surely believe, to produce either nothing or else something

from the fourth or the sixteenth century, containing phraseology which is archaic and even repellent, and containing also things which they explain only by explaining them away—I say I feel and many feel that this is not only not satisfactory but even not creditable to the Church of Christ, of Whom a Latin father well said that “He called Himself truth, not tradition.”¹ It is not an answer to this to reply that no modern restatement of faith would stand comparison with or out-rival the ancient Creeds, or, perhaps, even the greater later confessions. No intelligent person should desire either comparison or rivalry; and no person of historical sense should seek to displace the older symbols. The point is a different one, and it is this. A believing Church, living in England to-day, ought to be able—as much as and even more than a believing man ought to be able—to say in plain English what essentially and vitally it believes; and there is something wrong somewhere—intellectually and morally too—if it does not and cannot.

The subject of the chapter leads up to

¹ Tertu an, *De virginibus velandis*, i.

a fundamental question into which I cannot enter at length, but on which a few words may be said. It is the question of the authority by which we believe religious truth. Now, it is unfortunately too common, in the answering of this question, to have set against one another, as if they were contradictories, the authority which is external and that which is inward. I often feel that the two main sources of confused thinking are, the one, loosely defined terms, and, the other, falsely opposed antitheses. There are many people who seem constitutionally unable to assert anything without asserting it as against something else ; who cannot say that God is love without saying that He is *not* force, or that the authority for truth in religion is inward without saying that it is *not* outward. These negatives are not only unnecessary, but they betray an unphilosophical tendency of mind ; and when applied to God they are simply untrue, because God is the Universal Category—the Author of the force of gravitation as really as the Author of the gospel of love—Who is all things, the single exception being the one atheistic fact of sin. Let us, then, free our minds

from this false antithesis which would set, on the one hand, the external authority of history or the Bible or the Church, and, on the other hand, the internal authority of experience against one another as mutually exclusive. In determining the principles of authority, we must let one principle play upon another : that is more truly philosophical than pitting one against another. The external and the internal authority need one another, and neither alone is sufficient. Certainly, the external alone cannot give us religious truth. No outward word of history or of the Bible or of the Church can make truth ours ; and no religious assertion has for us the character of religious truth till it has entered into our personal experience, and has verified itself there. But neither is the inward alone sufficient. Our most fervent personal convictions are never quite free from the haunting suspicion that, after all, this is but subjective and has no sure correspondence with reality. It is when the outward witness and the inward experience *interlock* that religious truth finds an authority which is sure. And what can be maintained is that the great and central

and vital truths of our Christian faith—the things by which we know the love of God in Christ and by which our souls live—have this mutual corroboration. The historical assures us that our convictions or impressions about them are more than subjective imagining; and we sign the historical witness as our own religious experience. This (to me at least) is the basis of truth in religion. It applies, I admit, not to the details of dogma, but only to the great truths; but I imagine that most of us find, as we grow older, that we do not need to believe much if only we can believe well. I find the things I need to believe are things which, first, are attested in history; secondly, are confirmed by the Church, by which I mean, not a Creed, but the testimony of Christian people age after age; and thirdly, are real in my own life. That triple bond can stand the strain of criticism or of doubt. Truth so grounded is at once historic, catholic, and experiential; and there is no kind of truth in this world better grounded than that.

Chapter VI

Freedom and the State

IN these few and brief chapters it is not necessary to deal with the topic of ecclesiastical government. A recent Bampton lecturer, now Bishop of Gloucester, says that "no form of Church government can find any support, direct or indirect, in the teaching of our Lord."¹ If this be so—and it is unchallengeably so—questions of Episcopalian and Presbyterian and Congregational polity must not be made primary or vital issues of principle between Churches. On this matter, all I shall say here is that, were practical proposals for union before us, and were more fundamental matters of faith agreed upon, I do not think it would pass the wit of man, where there was a real will for unity, to adjust the relationships of these three types of government. The Episcopalian could admit a constitutional episcopate which

¹ Headlam's *Doctrine of the Church and Reunion*, p. 45. Vide also pp. 88-91.

is not a one-man rule ; the Presbyterian need not object to a bishop-president with the council of presbyters ; the Congregationalist may well accept some further organization by which the larger *ecclesia*, which is more than the local Christian gathering, can responsibly consult and authoritatively act. All this problem is secondary and is, I think, comparatively simple ; it hardly enters into the region of what properly should be called " Church principles." Many people are too much obsessed by what they call their Church's " distinctive principles," and often give to these a prominence and a devotion which are not always shown to the primary articles of the faith. A Church's principles, however, should be just Christian principles, and, as concerns the matter of Church government, no form of that, as has been said, can claim Christ's name. The present writer is a Presbyterian and is ready to discuss presbytery in its own place. But sensible Presbyterians do not now talk of " divine right," and they claim for their polity no more than that it is " founded on and agreeable to the word of God." Sensible Episcopalians—in Anglicanism at

least¹—would not claim much more. I thus do not propose, in a book professing to deal with first principles, to begin any argument on presbytery *versus* episcopacy. I pass to a deeper issue concerning polity which does involve a great Church principle—the principle of freedom.

The Church—under whatever polity constituted—is, essentially and immediately, Christ's Church. He did not call it by any distinctive ecclesiastical description, but He did say of it "*My Church.*" This is the root-thought of all genuine high-churchism. The Church, therefore, has to live its life and carry on its work with this thought of Christ's ownership and under a direct sense of responsibility to Him Who alone is its Master and Lord. But this is not done *in vacuo* or in some supernal spiritual sphere. It is all to be done in this world. In this world, the Church finds itself in contact with various influences and institutions which form part of the manifold structure of human

¹ I suppose a sound Romanist would say that the primacy of the Pope is as much *de fide* as any other doctrine is.

society. In particular it finds itself in close contact with the great form of human association called the State. The reason why it has to do with the State—or rather why the State has to do with it—is that the Church on earth is a *public* society, and it is the business of the State to take cognizance of everything in the life of society which is public and the constitution or conduct of which affects public interests. Thus the State, quite properly and indeed inevitably, has a relationship to the Church, because this society, while spiritual in its basis, is organized as a public institution in the social life of the world, and many elements in that organization are matters which directly concern the State. Now, it is here that we see the question of freedom emerging. For the relationship of the State to anything tends to be—if it does not always immediately and explicitly claim to be—control. The relationship of the State to the public society called the Church tends to be and often claims to be control. And if this control be, in the first instance, over those elements in the public organization of the Church which legitimately are the

State's concern, it very easily comes to be more than this and to mean the State assuming authority over the Church's actions generally, even when these are of a plainly spiritual character. This may be done in the way of patronage and protection; or it may be done in the way of repression and persecution. Sometimes it is done without any clear perception, on the part of either Church or State, of what is being done or of any question of principle being involved. But a question of principle is involved for the reason I stated at the beginning of this paragraph—namely, that the Church is Christ's and is responsible to Him alone, at least in all things of faith or duty which He has committed to it. Therefore—in, I repeat, at least these things—it must be free from any other authority in order to be free to obey its true and only Master. It cannot serve two masters in these things. Thus may arise, and, as a matter of fact, repeatedly and indeed constantly has arisen, between these two great forms of human association—the Church and the State—an issue, which for the former involves a real principle because it involves a ques-

tion of faithfulness to Christ Whose alone the Church is.

So many people—including even Churchmen who call themselves High-Churchmen—seem insensible to any principle in this matter that I shall begin by stating it in its most general and fundamental ethical terms. The root idea is this. We all know, I suppose, what liberty of conscience is. It means that a man has the right to claim to be left free in his moral acts and convictions—so long, of course, as these are not a nuisance or injury to society generally. It means that neither the State nor any other power should attempt to rule him or coerce him in these matters against his conscience. All people more or less recognize this and value it to-day, or profess to do so. But to the Christian man it is peculiarly sacred. He, of all men, must not let anyone or anything come between him and his conscience, in which his Lord's voice speaks to him. Wherever Christ's voice is concerned, he will, if he be true and faithful, listen only to Him. He will lose much and suffer much—he may suffer even to the death—rather than allow any earthly authority

to assume control where his own Lord and Master claims his obedience.

Now, the spiritual freedom of which I speak is just this assertion of conscience *by the Church*. For the Christian society, as truly as the Christian individual, has a Master. It has received command from Him on many matters, and there it cannot, as the Christian man cannot, recognize any other authority. The Church, too, has a conscience, and must claim freedom to keep a good conscience towards Christ. This is the principle at the root of the whole conception of the freedom of the Church. It is just the principle of the Christian conscience carried from the individual to the Society.

But both individuals and societies—even Christian individuals and the Christian Society—may make very unwarrantable claims in the name of conscience. It will not do to think that anything and everything may be allowed or anything and everything evaded simply by a man or Church raising the plea of the Christian conscience. We must see that, if this principle be claimed by the Church, it is rightly claimed and reasonably applied.

In the first place, the Church may claim it only in spiritual things. Absolute in its authority, conscience is not universal in its sphere. It dictates only in moral and spiritual life, and only there may a man claim to be left free to obey it. So the Church may not claim freedom from the State or other secular authorities about everything; but may claim it only in things of spiritual and moral faith and duty about which Christ plainly speaks to it. This is why the principle we are discussing is properly called "*spiritual freedom*." As such, it is to be maintained not only, on the one hand, against Erastianism, which gives the State authority over the distinctively spiritual affairs of the Church, but also and not less emphatically, on the other hand, against Ultramontaniam, which gives the Church authority over all temporal affairs. It is ecclesiastical arrogance and not Christian obedience which refuses to render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's.

For, and in the second place, the Church must not think that it is alone in having duties and responsibilities or even a conscience to keep towards a Divine Master.

The State also has all this. True is it that there is in the Church a sacred character which is not in the State; for the former has been, in a way in which the latter has not been, created by the redeeming grace of God in Christ, and, moreover, He is, in a peculiarly intimate degree, its life. Therefore not so precious nor so nearly is the State of God as the Church is; but it is of God quite as truly. And it is of Him directly. This is the religious ideal of the State which Dante¹ and others rescued from the papal idea that only through the medium of the Church was the Emperor the Servant of God. We must maintain that God has appointed the civil power for the ends of what, speaking broadly, we may call temporal justice and right, as truly and as directly as He has called the Church to serve the evangel; and that a Prime Minister may be as really God's "ordained"—it is St. Paul's word for him²—as an archbishop.

¹ *Vide* a notable passage in *De Monarchia*, iii, 15.

² Romans xiii. 1-4. One may add that St. Paul recognizes that, in these two spheres with their differing ends, different instruments or weapons are legitimate. Thus, force is not permitted to the Church in the service of the evangel of grace; but the State is given "the

If we are—and we should be—High-Churchmen, we must be also High-Statesmen. A high doctrine of the moral and religious responsibility of the State is the true corollary of a high doctrine of the spiritual freedom of the Church.

All this is clear enough in theory. And the theory is an admirable one—that the Church and the State are ordained each for its own sphere and that each should respect the sphere of the other. But it is simpler on paper than it is in the actual world. This is so partly from the nature of things, and partly from historical complications which have grown up between the Church and the State.

In the nature of things, these two spheres—the spiritual and the temporal—are not separate. They meet in man, who lives his life in both. And they meet in the life of human society in which spiritual matters have temporal things closely associated with them, and *vice versa*. This is not to say that they cannot be distin-

sword ” with which to put down crime. I think the pacifists failed here to make a just and Christian distinction. Nevertheless, war is an irrational and immoral form of force in the world to-day.

guished from each other, and are not essentially different. They can be distinguished from each other and are essentially different from each other, just as the moral and the physical can be and are, though they, too, meet in man and in life. Still, the spiritual, with which the Church is concerned, and the temporal, with which the State is concerned, *touch* each other; and at the points of contact, which are many and involved, the question of conscience readily arises. Concrete examples of this will make it clearer. It is plainly an interest for the Church's conscience who shall minister to its congregations; but with the occupancy of a cure of souls have become associated many temporal interests in which the State claims the determining say, and this may easily mean that it, practically if not formally, controls the spiritual appointment. Again, it is certainly a duty of conscience for a Church to declare its faith and follow its duty according to its light; but to do this may raise questions—for example, of property—which it is for the State, acting through its courts of law, to decide, and the decision may take

the form of an inhibition or annullings of what the Church has said or done. These examples are not imaginary. These are the identical issues which arose in Scotland, where this principle of spiritual freedom has been fought for and suffered for through centuries, in the conflict which terminated in the Disruption of 1843 and in the more recent famous Church case of 1904. On the former of these occasions, the issue arose for an established Church, on the latter in a non-established Church; so this problem is not solely a result of the complication of State connection (of which I shall speak presently); but may be at any moment a question of conscience for what are called the "Free Churches." No Church is and no Church should be independent of the State and its law in those aspects of a Church's life as a public society which are the State's concern. When, then, this point of contact is made occasion for the State entering into matters which are spiritual matters of conscience for the Church, what shall the spiritual society do? Well, the question is not other than that which may arise any day in the life of the individual man who seeks

to be faithful to conscience; and the Church has to answer it just as the Christian must. The Church must go straight on with what its conscience tells it is its duty towards Christ, and must take whatever civil consequences may follow. The issue is not to us rashly or imprudently invited; but if it is really forced upon the Church, then that high-road of suffering is the only way of honour. Again this is no imaginary course of action. It is precisely what was followed in Scotland in 1843 and 1904. At the former date, when the State sought to direct and dictate in the matter of the settlement of ministers in parishes of the Church of Scotland, and explicitly rejected that Church's "claim of right" to have its spiritual freedom respected, a great section of the Church—not the section least eminent in moral, spiritual, and intellectual character—surrendered every penny and every privilege their State connection could give them and went out to found the Church of Scotland free. And in 1904, when a legal decision of the supreme court in the land declared a great act of Church union to be civilly invalid and null, and, on account

of it, stripped one of the uniting Churches of all its earthly possessions, that Church—while protesting strongly and not in vain against a judgment which has not won general approval even in law and fact—held on unwaveringly to the union and never thought of going back from it.¹ And the result appears to-day. The result is that the freedom which can stand fast wins. To-day—not solely as the result of these sacrifices, but indisputably mainly through their witness—a quite unique and, so far as human terms can make it, an inviolable recognition on the part of the

¹ If any reader wishes a fuller account of these two struggles, the writer may be pardoned for referring him to the *Life of Principal Rainy*, vol. i, ch. iii, and vol. ii, chaps. xxv-xxviii. This and other references to Scotland in this chapter are not due to the writer's attaching exaggerated importance to the acts of a Church to which he formerly belonged and in the latest struggle of which for freedom he had a small share. The following slight incident (which is adequately authenticated) shows that one very far removed from any partiality for Scottish presbytery would endorse them. Preaching, in his Anglican days, on the spiritual liberties of the Church, Henry Edward Manning (afterwards the Cardinal) lamented that this truth was virtually unknown in England; "but," he went on, "there is a Church in Britain that understands it and has suffered for it, and that is the Free Church of Scotland."

State of the complete and inalienable spiritual freedom of the Church of Scotland has been attained, which promises to lead to a Church there united, national, and free.

The problem of spiritual freedom, I now pass on to say, is obviously immensely more difficult when it is complicated by conditions of establishment in which a Church has accepted the principle of the supremacy of the Crown over *spiritualia* as well as over *temporalia*. We must look at this phase of the question.

We need not get involved in the discussion of general theories on the subject. Plainly, establishment is no part of the original constitution of the Church; it is less a principle than an application of a principle which may or may not, according to circumstances, be expedient. If there be any principle in the matter, it is that of the duty of a State in its corporate capacity to acknowledge Christianity; but whether this is best done or even rightly done by the establishment of the Church—which, to-day, must mean *a* Church—is a question on which difference of opinion may well exist. I shall not discuss that

as an abstract question here. And as a matter of fact, it is not an abstract question, for where it presents itself, it does so as a legacy from history. The relationship between Church and State which we now call establishment began with the great settlement of Constantine. Whatever more that settlement meant—how much religiously in Constantine it meant is hard to say—it was at least a concordat conferring mutual advantages. The Church gained peace after centuries of persecution: the State, already in what Gibbon calls its “decline,” was reinvigorated by alliance with a great society the energy and indestructible enthusiasm of which made certain that the future lay with it. The result for the State was all good; Constantine’s act was, in the best sense, great policy. For the Church, the result was far from being unqualified good. Christianity henceforth became “the correct thing.” It was now in many ways for a man’s interest to be a Christian, and specially advantageous for him to be a cleric. True, the Church had now the opportunity to permeate the world; and it is significant that, from this time, the

expectation of the immediate *parousia* falls into the background of the Church's mind, and the sacred ambition that the Kingdom of God should be gradually established on the earth took its place. On the other hand, it was also true that the world had now new and subtle opportunities to permeate the Church; and one whom I often call the finest mind which Anglicanism has possessed since it lost the genius of the subtle Newman—and he had a far sounder mind than Newman—said the result was that “the world got into the Church and has never been got out since.”¹ However this may be, the association, through statutory and legal ties, between the civil society and the spiritual was thus set up, and it had great historical developments. The mutual relationship between Church and Empire is almost the subject of the story of the Middle Ages in their external aspect. One effect of this was that, in alike the political and the religious mind of Chris-

¹ Dean R. W. Church. I quote from memory and have not the reference at hand. (But, as the writings of Clement of Alexandria show, the world was in the Church before the latter was established. Worldliness is no prerogative of State-churches even to-day.)

tendom, the idea of a constitutional concordat between these came to be regarded not only as natural but even as necessary and inevitable. It is therefore in no way surprising that, when the Reformation came, this view continued almost unimpaired. The Reformation broke up the old theory of the unity of the Church, but it did not break up the theory of the union between Church and State. This union was carried on, in a necessarily sectional manner, by the setting up of various national Churches. Properly speaking, the idea of a national Church—a dubiously Christian conception and one which certainly needs catholic corrective—was an invention of the Reformation. It was the endeavour, made by men, habituated to an alliance between Church and State, to adjust that, which in its old form of a concordat between one universal Church under the Pope and one universal empire under the emperor was no longer possible, to the new conditions of the rise of separate nations and the separation into separate Churches. This development had one great blot. Not in every case—especially not so markedly in the Churches modelled under the in-

fluence of that Protestant High-Churchman Calvin—but in many cases, the national establishment of a reformed Church was carried out on a system which meant that the State had a real and, in some instances, the supreme control of spiritual interests. No doubt this was done, largely, for the sake of protection, and the circumstances may seem to have made it necessary. But it was fundamentally wrong in principle. It is right for the State to protect a Church, and it may be right for a State to establish a Church. But if it does so—even with the sincere motive of giving national homage to the true religion—it does not do so rightly or legitimately *unless it has respect to what a Church is and Whose a Church is*. The Church is a society with its own conscience. The Church belongs to Jesus Christ and, in all spiritual *credenda* and *agenda*, He is its one Master. Most of the reformation establishments—conspicuously, the Anglican and the Lutheran—went wrong here.

Now, while this is to be said explicitly and unqualifiedly—for here is a matter really of Church principle—one must, of

course, take account of historical and other factors in judging any particular case of it. For example, both for Anglicanism and Lutheranism, the civil supremacy seemed to be—and, perhaps as a matter of fact, was—the only available practical alternative which could displace the papal, at least in the first stages of the Reformation settlements; and to achieve this was urgent politically as well as religiously. Further, we must remember that in England, in which we are more immediately interested, the question of Church principle—or even of Church doctrine generally—did not interest and never has interested the nation's or even the Church's mind very deeply. The remarkable differences on this very question between the English national Church and the Scottish is, in part, a difference in racial temperament. The Scottish Churchman wants a principle which he can state and, if challenged, argue about, which he can stand for and suffer for and if need be—perhaps even earlier—will die for. The English churchman does not very much like principles and, perhaps, hardly knows one when he sees it; and he certainly has

no intention of being a martyr prematurely or of dying when he can usefully live. What he wants is a working arrangement. And the average Anglican believes he has this in the English establishment. Its Erastian character does not greatly perturb him in theory; when, in practice, it impinges somewhere too sorely on his conscience (as, for example, in the case of recent legislation about marriage) he contracts out on that point. And, generally, he is content not to raise the principle of the civil supremacy, if only the State will let the Church have some elbow-room (as in the Enabling Act) to deal, even under parliamentary control, with various matters, including matters so essentially spiritual as the Church's prayers, where parliamentary control seems indeed strange. It is impossible to regard this as a worthy view of the Church's position; indeed I must ask leave to say that I never feel able to take quite seriously the High-Churchmanship of any man who lives under the conditions of Erastianism. And it is worse. For spiritual freedom is not a thing of an ecclesiastical school, nor is it a racial thing. It is in Christ's con-

stitution of the Church which He called "My Church." Still, after all, this English view—so easily assailable in principle—is historically intelligible, and it is practical. I am not going to rail at it. But this I will say—that, if ever in the future there is a united Church in England, that Church must be free, in all spiritual things of faith and duty, from any kind of civil control.

There is one other aspect of this matter which must be touched on in a closing word. A real objection to the recognition of the freedom of the Church is this. I said a little ago that, at the time of the Reformation, the civil supremacy was found to be the only available practical safeguard against papal domination. Similarly, many persons feel that some kind of parliamentary or other civil control—or, at least, veto—is the only available practical safeguard against clerical domination. Now there is here not only, in some circumstances, a perfectly justifiable apprehension, but also a true idea. The true idea is that the Church is not the clergy; and it is the Church which has the right to freedom—the Church including laity as

well as clergy. This, I say, is a true idea. Indeed, devoted as I am to the cause of Church freedom, I would not lift a finger to help that the clergy should have an absolute and unchecked liberty in the Church. Here is one of the many places—examples of it have arisen several times in even these few chapters—where it is to be maintained clearly that *the true High-Churchism is not mere high-clericalism*. But this true idea is not truly expressed by the expedient of parliamentary or other civil control over the Church's spiritual affairs. That is a wrong way—possibly it may, in some circumstances, seem the only way available—of securing a right end. The right way is to give the Christian people their due constitutional place in the Church. Where this is done, the objection I have mentioned—which is, I repeat, in many cases, well grounded—is met; and the principle of freedom ceases to be a clerical interest and is seen to be a birthright of the whole Christian society.

In this chapter, the freedom of the Church has been spoken of mainly as a freedom from the State. But Christian

freedom is a positive thing; it is freedom to obey Him "Whom to serve is perfect freedom." Of this service I shall try to say something in a closing chapter.

IF the Church be a living thing, then the discussion of its nature must be related to that of its function. Life can, indeed, be better understood in terms of what it *is for* than merely in terms of what it *is*. A supreme example of this is the living Personality of Jesus Christ. The most helpful Christological thought tends less to define the "nature" of Christ in abstract terms, as was done (and, as we have seen, necessarily done) in the Christologies of the fourth century, and tends more to dwell on the "work" of Christ; and the best way for the mind of to-day to reach a convincing conception of what is called the Divinity of our Lord is to focus on and realize what He did and does and can do—for the world, for the lives of men, for one's own life and soul—and then to say that Jesus Christ is the Person Who does all this, which indeed no man but only God Himself could do. It is—not in

every respect, but in many respects—similar as regards the Church.

Therefore I propose in this closing chapter to speak of some practical issues of the elements of the Church's life which have been briefly and most imperfectly delineated in the previous chapters. We must realize that the principles we have been discussing are not simply ideas in or for a book ; they are principles of the Church, which is something with a life to live, and which has principles not that it may merely look at them or talk about them, but that it may carry them out in its conduct of its life in this world. If one may be pardoned—though, indeed, one should not—for the use of such a literary barbarism, the Church must function its principles. And the Church, which has a life to live, has also a work to do. It is not an end to itself, but is the servant of Christ and an organ of the Kingdom of God. It is these practical issues of Church principles which should have some exposition given to them before we close and about which I shall say a few things in this chapter.

It is hardly possible to lay down any rule or principle to prescribe how one must

treat a topic at once so general and so practical as the Church's life and work. Moreover, there are preliminary questions—such as, to name but one (which must be referred to later, if not now) the relation between the idea of the Church and that of the Kingdom of God—which meet us at the outset, and which, if we entered upon them, would delay us. I hope, however, that in this chapter, which I mean should be religiously simple, we need not spend time on points of method or of definition, and that I may be allowed to say the few main things I desire to say in my own way, which means at least to begin as they naturally arise out of the previous chapters in this book.

We must begin, then, with the Church's life not in relation to man but in relation to God. For, in the opening chapter, we have seen that the primary thing about the Church is that it is not merely a human society, but is created by God in Christ Jesus. The first function of the Church is to realize and acknowledge and magnify its origin. I know that to many this will seem no more than an exercise of piety, of small practical importance in comparison

with the tasks connected with human welfare which await the Church in this world. But this is a mistaken view. The Church's human calling has its roots in its divine creation. It is in what God in Christ has done for it that there is found the impulse for what it must do for the world. A Church which has lost this impulse, which has no real and deep sense of being what it is because of the redeeming love of Christ and the living power of His Spirit, has really lost a Church's soul. It has the consciousness only of an ecclesiastical or ethical or theological society, which issues endless programmes, as many societies do, but which has ceased to utter the one thing peculiar to the Church, and that is the Divine praises. The true Church, before it has any social programme or any theological system, knows its infinite indebtedness to the redeeming and saving love of God in Christ; and its first, because its *instinctive*, voice is adoring and grateful praise. Before either sociology or theology is doxology: "Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by His blood, and made us a kingdom and priests unto His God and Father, be glory

and dominion for ever and ever." A Church that cannot sing this, or that has forgotten to sing it, has never learnt or has forgotten the creative and constitutive principles of its life—what makes it a Church at all. It is no pietism that says this: it is simply axiomatic truth. This is what no pietist but so genuine an intellectual as the great critical protagonist whom I had occasion to quote when we were discussing the Bible—William Robertson Smith—meant when he used to speak of the Church's duty as worship. Only, we must not think of worship here in any narrow or conventional way. We are inclined to associate it mainly and even exclusively with Church services. Thus it may be imagined that this idea of the Church's duty is to be expressed by the daily services in a perhaps sparsely attended cathedral or by the almost continuous offices of a conventual house; and these religious exercises seem not very closely or practically associated with human life. But this is too narrow a view of what worship—or certainly, what Christian worship—is. Whatever place may be claimed for such services in church

or cloister, and whatever value they truly possess both for those who take part in them and for others, Christian worship is something far more than even the most sincere ritual. It is the offering of the spiritual sacrifice of ourselves and our lives to God, and this includes all our human duties and human interests. It is thus moral more than ritual. Yet it is not morality in place of worship. It is life conceived and carried on as a great and continuous acknowledgment of God, and, more particularly, with the sense of an infinite and ever-renewed indebtedness to the love of God in Christ Who has redeemed us and Who saves us. This is what the life of the Church is to be, and to be *first of all*. This is the deepest thing in its life—this indebtedness to God in Christ. We mistake the characteristic note in the Church. We think it is Catholicity or orthodoxy. But Christianity is not the only catholic thing in the world. Art has its catholicity, and, some day, socialism may have. As for orthodoxy, we read in Scripture that “the devils believe,” and their theology may well be better informed and more orthodox

than much of ours is ; but that does not make them a Church. The note of the society of the redeemed, which is a note of nothing but that society, is this sense of infinite indebtedness to Christ. It is this which should give the key to the whole life of the Church. That is what is meant when it is said that the Church's primary function is to praise God. Where this instinctive impulse is lacking, a Church has still to discover or to recover the first consciousness of its being as a Church, and it has not yet found the Christian impulse which sends the Church forth to its life and work in the world.

But not yet have we reached the point where the Church is ready to go out to the work of evangelizing men and reforming the world. The reader who is anxious for what is "practical" must still exercise patience. The duty I am going to speak of next is not either personal evangelization or social reformation, but is character. This is the immediate reflex of that sense of God and of God's redeeming love in Christ which is the first thing in the Church's consciousness. For that love makes us think, in the first instance, not

of other people and that we must preach to them, but of ourselves and our own character and how unworthy we are to make the love of God, when spoken through us, convincing and winning or even real. Before the Church can, with any persuasion and power, go out to influence men's lives, it must have itself a character which commends and verifies its message. It was another eminent critic—Dr. A. B. Davidson—who said that the most important work of a Christian minister was to live throughout the week that the people would feel that the things spoken of in church on Sundays are realities. A similar remark may be made of the Church's life. The Church has great words on its lips about God's love and about forgiveness and about salvation from self and sin. It has to tell men of these things. But it must make them real and credible. Words will never do this—neither the eloquence of the preacher nor the logic of the apologist. It is character and character only which makes even the world feel that these great words are more than words and are realities. The Church is to preach Christ; but if the Christ

it preaches is to be more than a dim and distant name, if the things in Christ of which it tells are to impress men as real things, the Church must have a character that witnesses to their reality. If it is to preach Christ, it must be like Christ.

Let us look a little more carefully at this familiar and facile expression. What was Christ like and what is it for a Christian or a Church to-day to be like Him? When this question is asked, we naturally recall two notable answers to it which have been given, one in Christian literature, the other in Church history. We all know the swan-song of mediæval mysticism in the cloister—the *De Imitatione Christi*. It is not less than a wonderful little book; there is hardly its peer for things said to the soul and heart and conscience so simply and yet so penetratingly. But it has a very imperfect thought of the Christ Whose life and character we should imitate. It is absolutely individualistic, and has no burdened sense of the world's needs. It has no picture of Him Who "went about doing good." In a word, it is of the cloister; and while it is true that, within convent walls, many a devout

soul has truly loved Christ, it is also true—and most emphatically is it to be said—that the arena of life is the place where Christ is to be imitated. This little book, then, while it says many things which we should do well to write on the margins of our minds and often recall, does not give the answer to our question which we need. The answer in history which I had in mind was the life and character of Francis of Assisi, of whom not only the whole Church but also the world agree in saying that he not only loved Christ but lived Him.¹ The root thought in Francis's life was how he could be like Christ. The question was for him intensely personal. The Church of his day was full of arrogant and avaricious priests and prelates—men of the world in the fullest and worst sense. Francis did not criticize or condemn their

¹ The reader who disliked the reference in a former chapter to Luther having "found Christ" will be happier now. But he (or she) must permit me to say that there is something limited and sectarian about one's apprehension of the meaning of the Gospel and one's sympathy with what a modern writer calls "the varieties of religious experience" if one cannot enter into the struggle at Erfurt as well as that at Assisi. *Non uno itinere potest pervenire ad tam grande secretum.*

lives ; he led no crusade against clerical luxury and never dreamt of breaking away from the Church. But he asked himself how *he* could live in some way really like Christ ? What was Christ like that he might imitate Him ? In many things, of course, he could not be what Christ was. But, said Francis, here is at least one thing. Christ was the servant of all : He claimed no rights ; He had no possessions and was absolutely poor. Francis would be like Christ there. It was not a new thought. But he carried it out with a simplicity and thoroughness, with an *abandon* and even joy, which made it a revelation and a gospel. It made the love of God and the character of Christ a credible and even a visible thing to masses of people to whom the Church had suggested neither love nor even goodness. Francis solved no problem—theological, ecclesiastical, even social ; and, in some respects, he was a really “impossible person.” But his life and character gave the world a glimpse of what Jesus was like which not all the degeneracy of later Franciscanism can obliterate and which will never be forgotten. Of such a man, the story of

the *stigmata*—in itself neither psychologically nor physiologically impossible—is not to be dismissed as fraud, or myth.

It is not suggested that everyone in the Church must imitate Francis in the way in which he literally imitated Christ. It is, indeed, obvious that the poor brethren of Assisi, who, having no possessions, lived on charity, could do so only because other people had possessions and could give them charity. But in Francis's view of life were, I think, the two main things which strike one about the view of life which Jesus Christ had; and they are just the two things which the Church needs to show if it is to make its message credible and real to men. One is an unworldly assessment of life's values; the other a really human sympathy. By the former, I do not mean merely that Jesus was a poor man. It is possible to exaggerate that. He was not poor in the sense in which many in England to-day are poor—in bitter and grinding and despairing poverty. And, though He said startling things about the perils associated with riches, He never regarded the possession of property as something wrong; as

a matter of fact, He was friendly with the well-to-do as readily as with any others. The poverty of Jesus, then, does not mean that the poor of to-day live as the Master was content to live ; nor is it an argument for an anti-capitalist communism. But it does mean that life is not to be assessed on material values. It does not mean either economic *laissez-faire* or socialism ; but it does mean unworldliness. And the Church, while it may not be called upon to support this or that economic or social doctrine, is called upon to exhibit a character which can be called unworldly. Its exhortations about the denial of self will fall flat till it does. Again, there was in Christ's view of life a most real human sympathy. Here, too, we must not exaggerate. The greater part of His time was taken up with what we should describe as religious and spiritual work—with prayer, with conversations concerning the things of the soul, with preaching and teaching. But there was in His life, also, a great deal of sheer humanity. He fed people who were hungry and healed people who were ill and comforted people who were sad. These things were not done as a kind of

parable of higher and more spiritual food and healing and comfort. They were done for their own sakes. He did them because He *had* to do them; they were spontaneous, natural, characteristic. Now they should be characteristic also of the Church. It has, as He had, a distinctively spiritual work; and I am going to say presently that it must make that distinctively spiritual work its business. But Christ Himself could not be to us the Saviour that He is if He had not been the man of genuine human sympathy that He was; and the Church will not succeed in even its spiritual vocation unless, like Him, it is humane, kind, loving. Human sympathy is not the Gospel, but, when there is not human sympathy, the Gospel of the love of God is simply an unreality. The Church, then, that is going to preach the Gospel of Christ, must have something of His humanity of heart as also of His unworldliness of spirit. This is what I mean when I name as the second thing which should be in its life in the world that it have a character which is like Christ.

It is impossible not to feel how much the Church has come short here. This is

not said indiscriminatingly and unjustly. There have been in every age of the Church's history and there are to-day in many places at home and abroad—perhaps most noticeably in the mission field—Christian men and women who have not put worldly interests first in their lives; while as to practical humanity, what would become of the philanthropies of any city in England to-day but for the support—not in money merely but in unselfish service—of Christian people and of the Churches? Still, it must also be sorrowfully said that the organized Christianity of the world does not succeed generally in giving the impression that it cares very little about money and very deeply about humanity. And in so far as this is true, it is here that the root-causes are to be sought for what is spoken of—often, indeed, by persons with small right to blame, but, still, often with too good reason—as the failure of the Church. The root-causes of that, I say, are not to be found in later and minor things, such as that the Church has not adopted some political or social programme or that its creed is old-fashioned or its services are

unattractive, but are to be found *here*—in this business of the unworldly spirit and the humane heart. What will make the character of the Church's life more manifestly like Christ? Certainly what is called ecclesiastical discipline cannot do it. Discipline is a right thing; and the reformed Churches had a true idea when they named it as one of the marks of a Church. For a Church to give it up—as some Churches to-day have practically done—is to surrender a real part of its moral ideal and moral duty. But discipline cannot do more than it can do. It can deal with namable sins; but a worldly spirit and a selfish heart are too pervasive to be namable in mere acts and are too deep to be reached by discipline. Moreover, applied beyond its own due limits, discipline does more harm than good. The history of Montanism in the early Church is one example of how it can engender pride in enforcing purity and can make men and women who are censorious rather than Christian. No; this second thing in the Church's life will be attained only as the Church continually goes back to the first thing—to realize

God again and God's redeeming love in Christ. It is not the medicine of the confessional—though confession of sin has its salutary and evangelical uses—but the power of the Cross, it is not the censure of Church courts but the look in Christ's eyes and the tones in His voice which will deliver a Church or deliver a man from being worldly and selfish, and so fit it or fit him to go forth, with some right to speak, as the servant of the Gospel and of the Kingdom of God.

We may now pass on to see what is the definite work which the Church is to do in the world for the Kingdom of God. Here it is necessary—as I said earlier in this chapter that it would be—to examine for a moment the relation between the Church and the idea of the Kingdom. This is a question on which a good deal of confusion exists, which people who like to disparage the Church easily misuse for their purpose. They tell us that Christ said hardly anything of an ecclesiastical institution, but said a great deal about the Kingdom; and from this fact they continually contrast the two ideas, much to the disadvantage of the Church, which

they represent as merely ecclesiastical and narrow in its interests, while the Kingdom is ethical and concerned with the practical business of promoting righteousness in the world. This is far from being accurate thinking and speaking. In the first place, if Christ did not—in his earlier teaching—speak about organizing a Church, that was because He already belonged to an organized Church. The Jewish synagogue was the Church of His days, and it should have become the Church of the Messiah and His Gospel. It was when its rejection of Him became manifest that He declared He would build *His* Church, thus, in the most significant way, showing that He viewed a Church as indispensable. And later, in the days after Christ had left the earth, it was only when the Jewish Church to which all of the original Christian company belonged, began to cast out the disciples of the Nazarene, that the Church as we know it became a great and urgent topic for the minds and in the work of the Apostles. There is here not the slightest conflict of ideas or ideals or even methods ; it is a plain, historical development. If on historical matters people

would only first ask history, a great deal of time and confusion would be saved. More important, however, than this, is it to say that, when Christ spoke of the Kingdom, His conception was something very different from that of the modern mind which I have just indicated. The Kingdom of God is a very general term. The idea might be rendered "the Reign" or (as Dr. Moffatt reads in his Revised New Testament) "the Realm" of God as truly as the Kingdom. The phrases in the Lord's Prayer "Thy Kingdom come" and "Thy Will be done" are practically synonymous. Certainly this is ethical, but it is also far more. Christ speaks of it in a transcendent way as something which we are not so much to strive to achieve bit by bit as rather to "see" as a great ideal or vision. The vision "comes" suddenly like a flash in the sky. It is come in Christ, for Christ gives meaning and reality and possibility and even assuredness to the grand idea of God over everything. Such were the conceptions which filled the mind of Christ as He pictured the Kingdom in parable after parable and when He talked, with sublime enthusi-

asm, of "the mystery of the Kingdom of God," of how only a man reborn in spirit could even see it, of how death itself, which He knew was before Him, would not rob Him of the day when He would drink again of the sacramental cup "in My Father's Kingdom." These transcendent ideas are in another realm of thought from the most excellent programme of social reform. Such reform is one of the means of serving this Kingdom. The means of the Kingdom Christ did not alter from what they had been. The Family, the State, the Church, and, indeed, every factor in human life are to be inspired with this vision and should serve it. All of these, therefore, are to be ethical—the Church in no way excepted. And thus I conclude—for I must not spend more time on this topic—the whole idea of the Kingdom of God as the practical crusade for moral betterment, while the Church is a merely ecclesiastical institution, is something leagues out of touch with what Christ thought of either the one or the other. It is most desirable that, on this subject, people would read the history a little more

simply and the New Testament a little more carefully.

This has been a digression, and we return to the question which suggested it—the question, namely, of the special work which the Church has to do in the world for the Kingdom of God. The answer to this may be found in the end to cover or concern many things; but it is, in the first place, something definite and distinctive. What that is we shall see if we look at how Christ Himself set about to start the Kingdom of which He had so transcendent an ideal.

When we read the opening chapters of the Gospels, we hear so much about a “Kingdom,” that we naturally expect that, as we read on, we shall find a good deal about its constitution and policy, about its public affairs and interests—about, in short, the many matters we associate with a Kingdom or realm or State or whatever we may call it; and we do not expect to find our attention turned to what is merely personal and private. We might expect a book like Plato’s *Laws* or More’s *Utopia*, if it is going to justify its promise of being about a Kingdom. But

very soon we find that the narrative of the life and work of Christ is not of this character. It is mainly taken up with the story of His dealings with individual men and women. He began by saying that He had come to usher in a Kingdom ; but it now seems that His later description of His aim in life is truer, when He said that "the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost." To turn this man and that man from sin and self to goodness and God—that is the main thing which we see Christ doing. Certainly He conceived of the Kingdom of God as meaning a renovated world ; but His whole ministry testifies to it that the first thing is to get people made new. And was He not right—profoundly right ? Had not that been precisely how all previous attempts to make a good and a happy world had broken down ? The Kingdom of God was far more than a merely Jewish thought taken from the Old Testament. Its ideal, under whatever name, had stirred elevated minds in many lands and was the desire of all nations. But it had not been realized in even the noblest and greatest nations. The sove-

reignty of theocracy in Israel, the inspiration of freedom in Hellas, the *majestas* of law in Rome—they had all failed to make a righteous and a happy world. They failed, not because these ideals of national genius were unworthy—they are ideals which have contributed imperishably to the highest traditions of the world—but because not one of them in the end could make and keep men really good, and could deliver from the passions which destroy the strength and the happiness of the lives alike of men and of peoples. Christ saw this. Whether, in such cases as the history of Greece or Rome, He knew it in the intellectual sense does not matter: He *saw* it. He saw that the Kingdom of God would not come unless men were personally and individually turned from sin to God. The Kingdom, as He said in one of His most pregnant utterances, is “within.” It is not in constitutions and policies and programmes and schemes and laws: it is in people. The first thing—not every thing, but the first thing—is to change the minds and hearts and characters of men. Unless this were done, His ideal of the Kingdom

would fail as other ideals had failed. And so we see Christ engaged not so much in constructing a programme for society as in calling men to a personal attachment to Himself which would alter their whole lives and their ideas of life. The best name for this still is the word "conversion."

Here is still the primary and definite and distinctive business of the Church for the Kingdom of God. It was no revivalist preacher but the author of *Ecce Homo* who said that conversion is the article of the standing or falling Church; and so it is. If the Church is not doing this, is doing everything but this, it is not doing its real business. Of course—just as in an earlier chapter I said of the word "worship"—we must not use this word in a narrow and conventional sense. It is a great word and a true word and it must be rescued from misuse. It is misused when it is thought of as something selfish. Conversion, in any Christian sense, is a turning of mind and heart and life from self to God; and nothing surely could be further from what is small than a turning *to God* and all that God means. It is the

greatest enlarging that life can know. Again, the word is narrowed and misused when it is tied down to a single experience and even to one form of that. The older evangelicalism, with all its earnestness, did harm here. The turning of a man to God is as varied in its ways as is the turning of one person to another. There is no more only one way of being converted than there is only one way of falling in love. The important thing is not the way of it but the *fact* of it. And the fact of it is not uncertain, however varied are the ways of it. There are many questions in religion which are uncertain and which become almost increasingly so as life goes on; but one thing a man not only may know but does know, and that is whether his mind and his heart and his life are turned towards God or are not. Here, as in other ways, a man "becomes aware of his life's flow." Now it is this question, which it is the Church's business to make clear and constraining, in, I repeat, no narrow or conventional sense, but none the less really because also largely. The Church's real work is to make men the personal followers of Jesus Christ, to

“ turn ” them personally from sin and self to good and God. If it is not doing this, it is failing in its special function, it is not really carrying out its Master’s work, and it is not even rightly serving the more general end of the Kingdom of God.

But we must pass on—for this chapter must not be unduly lengthened—to the social implications of all this, which brings us to the last aspect of the Church’s life of which I shall here speak. The conversion of men is essential and primary in the establishment of the Kingdom and is the definite and distinctive business of the Church ; but there remains what we may describe as the Christianization of human life. I may seem to have been too long in coming to this, but its place is here and not earlier.

The connection between the individual and the social is direct and clear so far as personal religion is concerned. The change or conversion in a man’s mind and heart of which we have been speaking is something essentially and indeed intensely individual. It means a soul face to face with Christ alone. *But the test of its reality is social.* Some of the strongest

things in the New Testament say this. It is unmistakable in Christ's parable of the Last Judgment. An apostle treats almost with scorn the idea that a man can love God, Whom he has not seen, if he does not love man, whom he has seen. This is the direct and clear connection between individual religion and social brotherhood. It is a connection which the Church, in its teaching and practice, has never made plain as it should be made. The Church has usually said that the tests of a man's religion and of his fitness to be a member of the Church are theological orthodoxy or ecclesiastical observances. It has not said that the real test is his humanity and brotherliness and social service. It has excommunicated men for heresy but not for hardness: it has heaped censure on the Sabbath-breaker rather than on the sweater of labour. It has thus given the impression that, in its eyes, offences against what is theological or ecclesiastical are worse than offences against what is human—which, in Christ's eyes, *they were not*. If the Church were plainer about this, and, both in teaching and in practice, said more bravely that it

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is no use for any man professing to be a "converted" and a Christian man if he remains, in his relations to his fellows, a selfish and inhumane and hard man, it would more truly reflect the judgment of the New Testament and better serve the Kingdom.

When, however, we turn to speak of the connection of the corporate life of the Church with social problems—and especially with the great problems of our political and industrial life—the question, we find, is not so easily answered. For one thing, there is little or no help given us from the New Testament. The reason for this is an historical one. In New Testament times, the Church had and could have no responsibility for the political and social conditions around it, even in matters—such as slavery or unjust taxation—where these conditions called for redress. To-day it is, of course, different. Christian people have a most practical share in their country's government, and, therefore, a real responsibility for national, industrial, social affairs. The franchise, the opportunities of citizenship, all the various organs of public life are to be used for

Christian ends. It will be agreed that Christian men are to make their religion apply to all in life, and this now includes civic and social life. But the question is whether and how far this is to be done by and through the Church. This is the question which is not so simply answered. It needs to be stated and considered with some care.

On the one hand, it must be recognized that the political and economic and social problems of the age need for their just and stable solution something more than simply that humanity which I spoke of in connection with the Church's character, or that brotherhood which is the test of personal religion. They need very special knowledge—practical knowledge of affairs or of business or of social laws. No man and no Church will discuss with authority or even intelligence a political situation or an economic dispute or a social evil without such knowledge. But such knowledge is no part of the equipment of the Church *qua* Church—though individuals in the Church may be experts—and is no part of the characteristic content of its message. It thus appears that the Church

cannot claim to be, in any special way, *qualified* to adjudicate in such matters, and that therefore it should leave them to those who are. The conclusion, then, seems to be that the Church's business is to call men to a personal turning of their hearts and lives to God—which, it has been said, involves and is tested by their having a social conscience—and that, thereafter, Christian men, each in the sphere of civic or social life in which he is qualified and through the organs, political or other, appropriate to that sphere, should work out the Kingdom of God in the world. This is a logical and intelligible view. In the end, we shall find it has substantial truth in it. But, stated of itself, it is not adequate; and it must not be adhered to with theoretical precision. Here, as we have found in other cases, life is not so simple as logic.

For, on the other hand, the Christian society, even as a society, cannot—least of all in these days—let it be said that what are called social problems are not within its concern. For at least two reasons it cannot. One is that its heart will not—or should not—allow it; the

other is that, in even the work of the personal gospel, it finds these problems facing it. Its heart will not allow it. If the Church has anything of the human sympathy of its Master, the fact that masses of men and women live their lives on the brink of destitution and under conditions which make it hardly possible for them to realize what manhood and womanhood are meant by God to be must move its heart, as the heart of Jesus was moved when He saw the hungry multitude or the hopeless leper. But further, the definite work of the gospel is met and thwarted by social conditions. The Church finds circumstances of such hardship and injustice and darkness that the message of love is made almost a mockery and the ideal of life which Christ calls men to is—remarkable exceptions to the contrary admitted—almost an impossibility. It is not to be wondered at that many in the Church, when appealed to, as the Church is loudly appealed to from various quarters, to make social reform part of its programme and almost its first aim, should feel that alike humanity and religion call it to respond. Thus may the Church be

involved in political and economic dispute and perhaps class warfare; and whether this be its work is a question which may well occasion doubt in even the most earnest Christian mind.

The line of least resistance here is an obvious and plausible compromise. What your typical Church leader—a man at once sympathetic and safe—will say is that the Church must proclaim the principles of social righteousness, while not pronouncing on the right or wrong of definite political policies or actual industrial situations. This sounds well; but it really does not amount to much. It is not difficult to draw up resolutions about justice and righteousness which deal in generalities and say many things, but take care *not* to say what the nation or the capitalist or the trades union should practically do in the name of righteousness and justice. I do not imply that there is nothing to be gained in the way of educating the public mind and conscience by articulating general principles; still, to generalize is the easiest of all intellectual exercises and to accept a general principle about right is the easiest form

of moral assent. Morality is *applied* principles—principles operating in life. And the enunciation of principles of social righteousness without any indication of their practical application to the definite situation—political or economic—does little to help the good cause because it does little to harm the bad. And yet, for reasons which I mentioned earlier, I admit that the Church is not really qualified to speak authoritatively on particular cases or to attempt the settlement of a political controversy in an industrial issue.

I think, therefore, that, while the Church must, if it be like Christ at all, have its heart deep in problems of social need, and also has a right, in the interests of its work, to press ceaselessly for their alleviation, the position that the actual way of their solution is part of the programme not of the Church but of the civic authority is sound. To do this—or, at least, with a Christian conscience, steadily to aim at doing it—is the essential meaning of what is called *national religion* (the establishment of a church being, in comparison with this, a quite secondary and formal matter). And the Church's relation to

this is not to propound schemes—to do which it is not qualified—but is to keep alive a distinctly Christian social conscience and, even more, to urge upon Christian men and women to carry their Christianity into their political and business and social life. What is wanted is not to politicize the Church, but to Christianize politics. This means that Christian people must take their civic life much more religiously than they do. They must regard it as a responsibility to Christ second only to their responsibility for their own souls. It is a responsibility which cannot be discharged by mere party loyalty; it is to be discharged to Him, at the polling-booth or on the magisterial bench or on the public board. Of course, this will be admitted in a vague way by almost anyone in sympathy with what is religious; but if it were taken seriously, it would mean much for the Kingdom of God. Of a very powerful vested interest in this country, it is often said that “its trade is its politics.” There is need of more people who will say that their religion is their politics—which, be it noted, is by no means to say that their politics is their

religion—and who will act on that with conviction and consistency and courage. I do not mean the foolishness of what is called a “Christian party” in the State. People will continue to be born little liberals or little conservatives or little labourists; and religion neither is meant to nor can alter that natural fact. But *let Christian men stand together* on great and clear issues of social right and social wrong. That is what is needed. That is what the Church, irrespective of party or any social interest, should call upon Christian men to do. It cannot profess to do their political or economic work for them. It cannot, in Christ’s name, give them the solution in a programme. Christ does for us—and the Church can tell men this—what we cannot do for ourselves; but He does not do for us—and here the Church has no special revelation—what we can do for ourselves. We cannot of ourselves know God’s character: Christ tells us that. We cannot of ourselves achieve salvation: Christ does that for us. But we can of ourselves discover the facts of science: Christ tells us nothing new there. And we can of ourselves—guided indeed

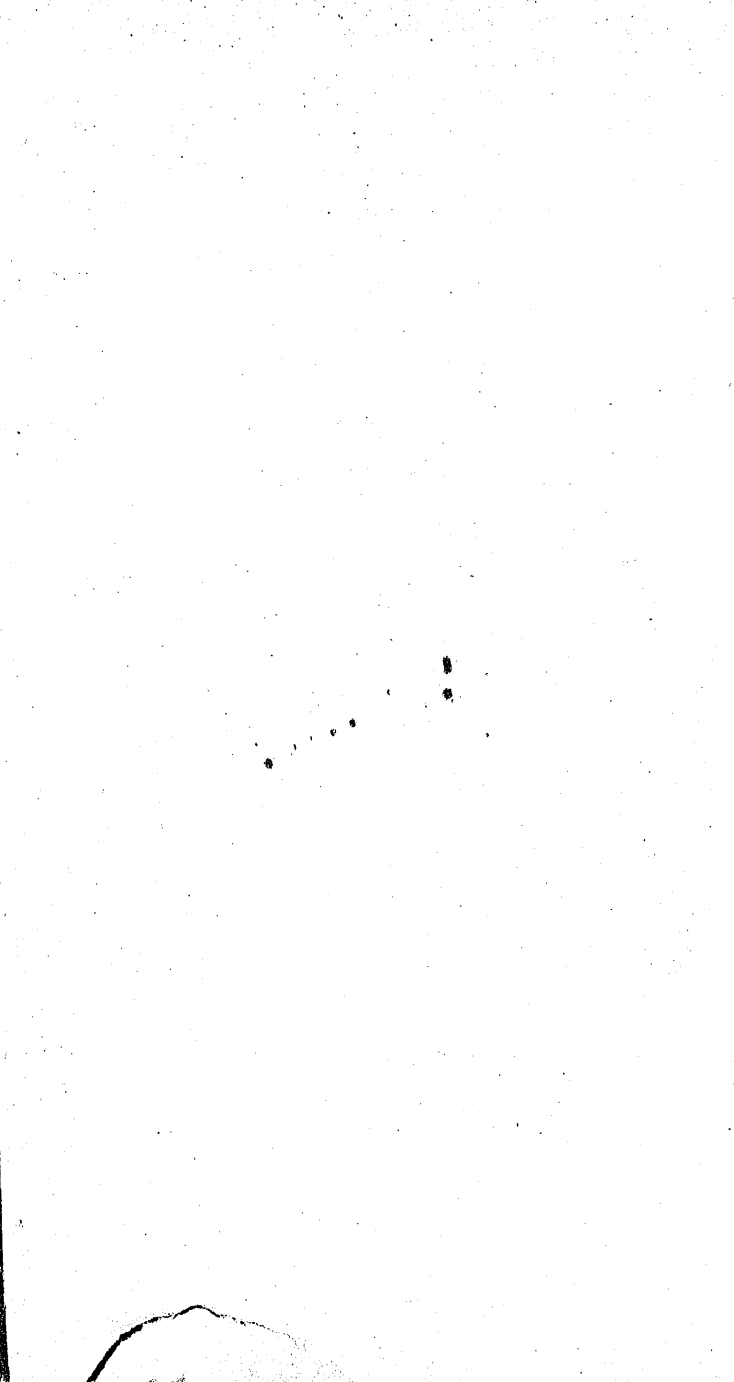
by His Spirit, but still not by supernatural revelation—work out social justice: Christ does not relieve us of that work or even illuminate His Church to do it for the world. Thus, not by miracle or by revelation or even by the Gospel, but by the Christian mind and conscience seriously applied to the complex problems of political and industrial and social life, shall the Kingdom be established on earth. It needs Christian men; but it needs also thinking. It needs men who have learned from the Gospel a new allegiance and, with it, have had awakened in them a new social conscience, and who now say, in Blake's high-spirited lines—they are often quoted, but the point of the first line is not always apprehended—

I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

I must close these fragmentary and most imperfect remarks on the things of the Church. In this chapter I have spoken of four aspects of the Church's life: *the worship of God*; *the character of Christ*; *the*

conversion of men ; the Christianization of life. The order is important and indeed essential. Let us look at them in the reverse order and we shall see how this is so. Why is the political and industrial and social life of the world so far from Christian ? It is—not entirely but mainly—because there are not, in the various spheres of life, men and women enough of Christian character and conviction to make it what Christ would have it to be. There are, in short, not enough Christians—or not men Christian enough—to go round. Why, then, are there not more ? The answer is—again not wholly but largely—because the Church, to which the Gospel has been entrusted, has not always shown that unworldliness of spirit and that humanity of heart which commend the Gospel as real and convincing to men. Then, once again, why has the Church failed in this ? It is—here, not in part only, but altogether—because the Church has not a deep sense of God and of His love in Christ, before Whom worldliness is excluded and unlove ashamed. Thus do these aspects of Church life lead back, each to that prior to it. And thus does our

last chapter end where our first began. The life of the Church is fulfilled only as it goes back to the creative idea of its being. And, alike in the carrying out of its work on earth for the Kingdom of God and in the discussion of its "principles," we see it to be true, in the words of one of the most beautiful of ancient collects, that "all things return to perfection through Him from Whom they took their origin"—*per ipsum redire omnia in integrum a quo sumpserunt PRINCIPIA.*



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